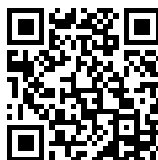

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SPIRITISM THE MODERN SATANISM

THOMAS F. COAKLEY

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S P I R I T I S M
THE
MODERN SATANISM

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S P I R I T I S M

THE

MODERN SATANISM

By
Thomas F. Coakley

*"Whose coming is according to the
working of Satan, in all power
and signs and lying wonders."*



EXTENSION PRESS

Le Moyne Building

Chicago

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INTRODUCTION

It is evident from our current literature that thoughtful students of the Spiritistic movement are beginning to realize that, in the controversy to which it has given rise, problems of a very grave character are involved and that these problems cannot possibly be shelved or ignored. To the ordinary reader of the popular works on Spiritism increasingly issuing from the press, the phenomena described and the spirit messages reported constitute no doubt the most interesting and fascinating aspect of the subject. He accepts the evidence presented at its surface value, and is quite willing to believe that the spirits of the departed have found a means of communication with the sense world, and that they are really the individuals they claim to be. Devoid, in most instances, of any deep and clearly defined religious conviction or belief, he does not concern himself with the *moral* aspect of the matter:—the nature and aim of the messages conveyed, or the effect produced by spiritistic practices upon the experimenters and the sensi-

tive. He has moreover a vague sort of sympathy with the attractive description of the other world life that these curious messages so often convey, and finds in them nothing contrary to the dictates of his reason and his common sense. To such persons the question of the identity of the communicating agents, the immense difficulties lying in the way of establishing that identity, and the ultimate purpose underlying this deliberate effort to open up communication with the living is of no particular interest. It is sufficient for them to know that there is another world and another life, in which they may conceivably find more happiness than they have found in this one.

But to the *serious* student of the subject who holds a deep religious conviction, based upon what he believes to be incontrovertible historic fact, and who consequently scrutinizes the contents of these spirit messages and their manifest aim and purpose, the matter assumes a very different aspect. He sees very clearly that problems are here involved which touch the very foundations of religious belief and that these problems must be solved one way or the other.

It is quite true that spirit messages generally

speaking are very ambiguous and contradictory, one spirit often emphatically asserting what another spirit equally emphatically denies. The messages moreover are apt, in many instances, to reflect the mentality of the medium through whom they come. It is all the more remarkable that, with respect to the great subject of Revealed Religion, the spirits of the seance room are strangely unanimous in their assertions. They always and everywhere declare that Christ was not divine in the sense in which he declared himself to be divine, and in which the historic Christian Church defines that doctrine. They assert that the Fall of Man, the Atonement on the Cross, the permanent and irremediable consequences of unforgiven sin, are not matters contained in the original Christian teaching, but after-developments and speculations of theologians respecting which nothing is known in the world beyond the grave, and which the spirits are now specially deputed to refute.

The historic Christian, therefore, who is acquainted with the true history of Christian thought and belief, and who knows that these doctrines are not only contained in the clear and

explicit teaching of Our Lord himself, but that they formed the belief of the earliest Christians who forfeited their lives in millions because of their profession of this belief, is confronted by a problem which he cannot possibly evade and of which he is bound to find the correct solution. He must recognize that there cannot be any kind of intelligible compromise between the teachings of the Church and those of the spirits, and that if one is true, the other must necessarily be false. Which is false and which is true? This is the question which thousands of perplexed minds, in many lands, are asking themselves at this moment.

Any serious attempt to answer this complex question, in an adequate and convincing manner, demands not only intimate acquaintance with the intricacies of modern psychical research and with the results of true scientific investigation, but also that accurate historical and theological knowledge which only years of systematic thought and training can furnish.

To one therefore who, like myself, has chiefly confined himself in his writings to the scientific and experimental aspect of the subject, but who

has always been conscious that he has thus not covered the whole ground in this great controversy, the appearance of such a work as this is a source of real gratification. I heartily welcome the learned author as a fellow worker in a field which is in large measure virgin soil, and where trained thinkers, such as he, are sorely and urgently needed. In his treatment of the subject, especially in his second chapter, Doctor Coakley has shown the utter untenableness of the Spiritistic reasoning respecting the person of Christ, and it seems to me that his exposition can scarcely fail to bring conviction to minds that are not wholly blinded by prejudice and misconception. I warmly commend the book therefore to those serious searchers after truth, with many of whom my own work is constantly bringing me in contact, and who are sincerely anxious to find their way to the true solution of what is perhaps the most serious of all the problems that have ever perplexed the human mind.

J. GODFREY RAUPERT.

SPIRITISM

THE MODERN SATANISM

CHAPTER I

SPIRITISM A PLOT TO DESTROY CHRISTIANITY

"For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch as to deceive if possible even the elect. Behold I have told it to you beforehand." (1)

"Therefore hearken not to your prophets and diviners, and dreamers and soothsayers, and sorcerers." (2)

The most popular amusement this year is Spiritism. A vast proportion of the population is practicing it, consulting mediums, purchasing the latest books, magazines and newspapers dealing with it and attending lectures by the leaders of Spiritism and Psychic Research in such numbers that no hall in America has been large enough to contain those clamoring for admittance. The Eighteenth Amendment to the American Constitution enacting Prohibition has well nigh abolished the cabaret of dances; but

(1) Matt. xxiv, 24.

(2) Jer. xxvii, 9.

in its place we have a cabaret of ghosts, with continuous performances, night and day. The spirits have invaded the literary field and volumes are written and dictated by spirit controls, who seem to favor literary folk above other ancient and honorable professions. Detectives have their favorite mediums for the purpose of apprehending criminals, and brokers and their clients consult them frequently to learn the fate of their investments. Some business men keep several mediums on their payroll, consulting them independently on questions of importance, and basing their action upon their agreement or disagreement. School children are purchasing the Ouija pointer at bargain sales in the basements of large department stores; fashionable ladies consult the planchette at afternoon teas, until the country at large seems to have been seized as in the grip of an epidemic of Spiritism.

Crazes such as this sweep over the world from time to time. They seem to have their cycles just as diseases come and go. The present momentum obtained by Spiritism threatens to rock the bases of civilization and of reason, unless we soon revert to sanity and wholesomeness. In all

these mental crises, even the keenest minds are sometimes swept from their intellectual anchorage, giving the weight and prestige of their once great sane and sober names to the propagation of error.

The present craze for Spiritism is by no means a novelty in the world's history. In substance it is as old as mankind. In ancient times the pagans practiced the evocation of spirits; it was common in India, in Chaldea, and among the Egyptians, and it has existed in China from time immemorial. We find it in classic Greece, and stately Rome. Socrates and Aristotle consulted the spirits, and the works of the most celebrated Roman authors contain many references to the practice. The Old Testament has many passages containing severe prohibitions against its use, although Christianity was the first real consistent enemy of necromancy, divination, magic, witchcraft, communicating with the souls of the dead, and demonology.

Modern Spiritism began in 1848 with the advent of the Fox sisters. So swift was its progress that in 1851 there were at least one hundred mediums in New York alone. In a brief space

it swept the entire country. By 1854 no less than 1300 persons signed a petition to Congress requesting a national investigation of its claims. Some of the most prominent citizens of the United States gave it their support. Soon it invaded Europe causing immense interest and excitement. So great was its popularity that in 1887 there were about one hundred newspapers dealing with the philosophy and phenomena of Spiritism. Its adherents were numbered by millions, lectures were given every day of the year, and spiritistic circles were held in nearly every city, town and village throughout the length and breadth of the country. Since the outbreak of the Great War the movement has grown by leaps and bounds, and there is no telling the number of those affiliated with the latest fad. Spiritistic temples are being erected in many parts of the country, and a veritable frenzy of spirit consultation has seized upon the whole population, stimulated by a flood of sensational articles in newspapers and popular magazines, all of them challenging the essential and fundamental doctrines of Christianity.

The one precise differentiation between the

movement today, and all that have occurred in the past, is that those who look upon themselves, and who are looked upon by others, as the leaders of the Spiritistic cult, are Scientists of greater or less reputation. Everything connected with Psychic Research today seems to be clothed in a scientific garb. Up to the present generation Spiritism had never laid any serious claim to a scientific foundation, when suddenly Scientists with great names seize upon the movement, and endeavor to give it an academic standing among the learned and serious of the world. It is precisely this feature which entitles Spiritism to a claim upon our attention. It means that the reality of Spiritistic Phenomena can no longer be denied. Too many eminent personages of unsullied reputation have given many anxious years to its study to allow us to enter a sweeping denial of the phenomena they report, or to waive them aside on the plea of fraud or trickery. And the scientific background and support it is able to produce makes it a more than ordinary enemy of Christianity. That crowds flock to Spiritistic seances and purchase the literary productions of Spiritistic authors, are only evi-

dences of the shackles with which the human mind has been enslaved by so-called Science. We have been worshiping science instead of God these many years. We came to the conclusion long ago that everything uttered by scientists was true, and multitudes today are willing to deny Christ at the bidding of this or that scientist. The world at large little reckons that these same scientists, or their predecessors who led the scientific world in past generations, denied Christ upon purely materialistic grounds. To deny Christ seems to be the great thing, whether it be on materialistic or spiritistic grounds. During the past two generations Scientists have been the avowed enemies of everything that even remotely concerned the soul or the supernatural life. Let any theologian, however meek and humble of heart, even hint at the immortality of the soul, and at once the scientific world would scoff and laugh, saying there is neither a soul nor a future life, and that immortality is a figment of the imagination.

Today all this is changed, and the successors of those who formerly railed at God and the spiritual life, are now crying from the housetops

some of the very truths which Christianity has preached for 1900 years. The pity is that the present uproarious propaganda cannot be received in its entirety, since it is mixed with so much error. Because Spiritists admit the immortality of the soul, which is a Christian dogma, is no reason why we should admit other statements of Spirits which are contrary to Christian doctrines. It needed no ghost or materialized spirit or discarnate soul or hysterical medium to tell us that the soul is immortal. We always knew that. It has been a doctrine taught by God to humanity from the very foundation of the world. Even today scientists decline to investigate the Christian proofs for immortality, preferring to wander in a labyrinth of seance communications without proof of identity. The modern Spiritistic craze proves just one thing: Materialism is dead. How the great scientific leaders of the nineteenth century must turn in their unquiet graves at this complete revolution and repudiation of their once vaunted opinions!!

Spiritism has been acclaimed on two continents as a new Religion, because, if we were to

believe Spiritists, Christianity has broken down, Religion is dead, historical Christianity has failed. Remarks such as these fall limpidly from the lips of the great High Priests of the widely heralded *New Revelation*. And yet on mere historic grounds we can easily demonstrate that instead of being a New Revelation, Modern Spiritism is an ancient heresy. There is nothing substantially new in it; it is merely Anti-Christ masquerading in modern clothes. The savages of antiquity were acquainted with nearly every one of the phenomena of modern Spiritism. Scientific men are just now becoming familiar with these facts that are evident to any one familiar with the history of black magic. There is scarcely a nation or a race or a period in the entire history of the world which does not reveal to us a well defined effort to hold communication with the unseen world. Hence we must brand as presumptuous those who claim that Modern Spiritism is a New Revelation; it is in reality nothing but a new form of arrogance, for Spiritists are by no means the pioneers or discoverers of any new or wondrous psychic laws. Historical Christianity is not dead, nor is it likely to

die, whatever Spiritists and their advertisers say to the contrary.

Was it not of his Church that Christ spoke to Peter on a memorable occasion those far famed words "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it."⁽³⁾ If the Bible means what it says, if Christ was sincere in this statement, how can Christianity have failed, as those fond of Psychic Research allege? Is Christ in error, or is it the spirit rapping, table tilting mediums and their spirit controls? Did not our Saviour promise his Church "I shall be with you all days, even to the consummation of the world?"⁽⁴⁾ How then can Christ's Religion be dead? And what must we think of the Spiritists who give utterance to such destructive doctrines? In spite of the age old declarations by Our Divine Redeemer guaranteeing perpetuity to his Religion, we are told by those who follow Psychic Research that these texts are unmeaning. The lie is passed, and we are assured that historic Christianity has spent its force, and now another revelation has succeeded it. They thrust upon a grief-stricken world an entirely new Theology,

(3) Matt. xvi, 18.

(4) Matt. xxviii, 20.

which they claim is the very essence of the Religion of Christ, long obscured and travestied by his followers.

Vast numbers of its mediums and adherents look upon Spiritism as their religion. They attend no other church than the Spiritistic. Let us not forget that Spiritism is everywhere stressed as a new Religion. The great object of the new creed is to inculcate the religious frame of mind. All the seances are looked upon as religious institutions. They are invariably opened and closed by prayer. No levity is permitted. A hymn is sung occasionally during the course of the seance.

But we must not suppose that Spiritists assume their new Religion to be a home-made, man-made affair. They claim a divine origin for their new cult. In some halting way they see the absurdity of having an effect greater than a cause, so they realize they must begin in the next world, claiming a divine source. They style their present spiritistic activity as the greatest religious event since the death of Christ, because it has resulted in what they say is a breaking down of the walls between two worlds.

It is the avowed purpose of Spiritism to communicate with the souls of the dead, to catalog and classify the subtle and elusive utterances from beyond, and to construct from them an entirely new religious philosophy and theology. They lay great stress upon the appeal to human reason in their new religion, to the exclusion of Christian faith. Just how much value we should attach to this spirit inspiration may be inferred from a well known remark of St. Paul. "But though we or an angel from heaven preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema."⁽⁵⁾ Frequently spirits claim they desire to bring about a union between faith and reason. But this is a mere play upon words. Such a union as they proclaim would not be a union of two partners, each busily employed in his own sphere, in helping the human soul onward and upward through darkness to God. Rather it is to be a sort of unrecognized union, a morganatic alliance, the one bond, the other free, with science in the saddle. Indeed Spiritists tell us plainly that the so-called reconciliation between Science and Religion is

(5) Gal. i. 8.

one involving the entire triumph of Science. So instead of Science being the handmaid of Religion, as it should be in the ordered scale of knowledge, the tables are turned, and Religion is to be the slave of Science.

Spiritists wish for certainty and the evidence of their senses instead of divine faith. In this manner they are attempting to do away with Christian faith, which they continually scoff at, yet it is the one thing that Christ praised on many occasions. So important is it that Holy Scripture solemnly warns us "without Faith it is impossible to please God."⁽⁶⁾ In countless places in the New Testament, its necessity is insisted upon to such an extent that it is the very essence of a Christian that he believe and put into practice all the truths that God has believed.⁽⁷⁾ Hence the insistence by Spiritists upon sensible vision and scientific certainty to the exclusion of divine faith in God is a violent assault upon the very foundations of Christianity.

The spirits are crafty and unreliable; hence we must not be surprised when their earthly literary representatives become apt pupils at dis-

(6) Heb. xi, 6.

(7) Matt. xxviii, 19.

sembling. They deny every fundamental doctrine of Christianity, yet they still wish to be Christians. They affirm with vehemence that they merely desire to modify Christianity and to make it accord with the facts of Psychic Research. They want to "serve two masters" notwithstanding a certain notable passage in the "Sermon on the Mount"⁽⁸⁾ to the contrary. Hence the intellectual acrobatic feats performed in affirming and denying the same thing at one and the same time. In one place they tell us solemnly that Spiritism is a New Revelation; then we are told just as energetically this does not mean that it will necessarily crystallize into a new Religion. None the less they are all agreed that Spiritism has come to add new lustre to Christ's teaching. We may remark in passing that Spiritists are not at all modest. They see nothing incongruous in the finite giving lessons to the Infinite, the creature instructing the Creator, and human beings with all their limitations giving splendor to the teachings of Christ!! The ages of Faith have always looked upon Our Saviour as the Great Teacher; it remains for

(8) Matt. vi, 24.

those who make propaganda for Psychic Research to teach The Master!!

In spite of their dogmatic statements, the literary exponents of the New Revelation are not quite sure whether their attitude toward Christianity is constructive or destructive, even though Spiritists eventually reject every important doctrine of historic Christianity as revealed by Christ, and found imbedded in the pages of Holy Scripture. This contradictory quality is one of the striking characteristics of Spiritism. The very opposite is verified in Christianity. "The truth shall make you free" from all doubt, anxiety, suspense, uncertainty and indecision; Christian faith is sure, certain, definite, precise, unambiguous, the undoubting adhesion of the mind to eternal truth, and Spiritism has none of these qualities.

Psychic Research seems to some of its devotees to resemble a modern Associated Charities organization, a sort of connecting link, or clearing house, a great unifying force, the one provable thing connected with every religion, Christian or non-Christian, forming the common solid basis upon which each rests, in some ways

confirming ancient systems of religion, and in some ways entirely new. A glorious comprehensiveness!! A sort of *omnium gatherum*!! And this is to be one of the shining marks of the New Revelation. You may believe in God, or not; you may assert the Divinity of Christ, or deny it; you may proclaim the divine authorship and inspiration of the Bible, or see in it merely a defective human document; you may be a Universalist or a Unitarian; you may worship Christ or worship science; you may do any one of these and a hundred other mutually impossible things in the new Spiritistic Religion, and see nothing incongruous in it!! O Science, what absurdities are uttered in thy name!!

Spiritists are not too fond of accuracy of statement. Their leaders assure us that when holding communication with the spirit world they have unhappily to deal with absolute cold blooded lying on the part of wicked or mischievous intelligences. This is a very fatal admission on their part. To claim that their Religion is founded upon statements made by such lying agencies shows at once that Spiritism is a subtle attack at the very heart of Christianity.

There is no need to be other than purely objective in the whole investigation of Spiritism. Men who are loudly championing its cause look upon themselves as scientists. Hence we have a right to ask that if a new force has been found operative in the phenomena of Spiritism, let us have proof of its existence other than seventy years of such mediumship as we know today. For the truly critical student who weighs all the possibilities up to date we have not had a single conclusive proof of spirit identity from the other world. Every serious investigation of psychic phenomena during the last few generations has had but one result—absolute failure to demonstrate the truth of the assertion made so emphatically that spirits can be positively identified. Rewards of large amounts of money have been offered for the production of a single attested proof of genuine spirit identity. These rewards have never been claimed, and no attention seemingly is paid to them by the leaders of the present Spiritistic movement. Not a single spirit has come to us with anything but empty hands. After a long life given to an examination of the phenomena, some very great authorities are

forced to say that the revelations from the other side by no means prove that they come from the souls of the dead, or from discarnate spirits; rather some of them incline to the diabolic theory. Yet despite this notorious lack of proof, Spiritists boldly assume that the whole question has been proved, and they are amazed at our refusal to look upon this attitude as conforming to the scientific method. Science cannot be built upon doubt. Negation and contradiction and suspicion are not the stuff out of which science is builded. Furthermore, the so-called revelations from beyond have usually been made not by the great and good of heart, but by the flotsam and jetsam of the spiritual world. If evil spirits can come back, why not the good?

Spiritism tells us nothing about God, his nature, his attributes, his perfections, his operations; it leaves us unenlightened as to how we can know him, love him, or serve him; it sets up no moral code, no system of Philosophy or Theology. It leaves us like the seance room, dark and doubting. It seems to acknowledge that we can know nothing about God, yet the very essence of religion is to know God:—

"This is Eternal life" says Holy Scripture "that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."⁽⁹⁾ Hence if we cannot know God, Spiritism is virtually a Religion without a God.

Over against this if we look for positive and constructive results to balance the ledger, we will search in vain. The cult has brought to mankind nothing of value; it has given us no heroic examples of self denial, nor a single disclosure worth mentioning; no secret of nature has been brought to light; no invention that would benefit the human race; no discovery that would make for the progress of civilization; nothing that adds to our happiness or that makes nobler or higher our mutual relations on earth; there has been no impulse given to art, or music, or science, or literature, no new ideas have been promulgated, no new principles have been proclaimed, nor from all the past history of Psychic Research have we any ground to hope that any such benefits will ever accrue from it.

Spiritists forget easily. No sooner have they done telling us that they have come to give a new

(9) John xvii, 3.

polish to the teachings of Christ, than we are brusquely informed that their task is to be a very thorough housecleaning. The lustre they are to give the Church founded by the Son of God is not to be a thin veneer; the axe is to be laid to the very roots, and historic Christianity must change or perish. Psychic Research is a revolution in religious thought, we are told, and historic Christianity has received its death blow; it lacks foundation, but Spiritists are rushing to the rescue to give religion the firmest basis upon which it has ever stood. These are almost verbatim expressions found in the very voluminous literature of Spiritism today. This reminds us of a certain remark of Our Lord to St. Peter who thereupon became the enduring rock upon which Christ erected his never failing Church. "Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."⁽¹⁰⁾ Up to the present time the only Church that holds its ground is the one erected on the rock of Peter, and it needs no reinforcing from modern Spiritism. All other churches established during the last 1900 years have had no

(10) Matt. xvi, 18.

such firm foundation; the heretical creeds have all crumbled, and we smile at the assertion that Modern Spiritists have come to strengthen that which Christ himself made impregnable. Yet it is insisted that an acceptance of the teachings of Spiritism brought to us from beyond would deeply modify historical Christianity as taught by Christ. Why, may we ask, have 1900 long and anxious years passed while we have been allowed to remain in ignorance of this doctrine? Why postpone the modification until the twentieth century? Where have the spirits been all this time; or did they lack efficient publicity agents such as their present leaders are proving to be?

Spiritists tell us that it is certain the New Testament records statements which have no meaning at all unless they imply a knowledge of Psychic Phenomena. They inform us that Christianity has long been guilty of false witness, and they hope the Christian people may come back to the teachings of Christ whom they have so long misrepresented. After reading these declarations culled from many Spiritistic sources competent to speak in its behalf, we turn to a well known passage in the Gospel where Christ

clothed his representatives with the most ample authority. "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me."⁽¹¹⁾ "Whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven."⁽¹²⁾ Confronted with these majestic lines, it is clear that modern Spiritists are the ones who misrepresent. They remind us of Ingersoll; the only difference is that they are if anything more blasphemous. The heathen Colonel was fond of libeling Moses; whereas the Spiritists libel Christ.

Hence it is evident that Spiritism, or Spiritualism, or Psychic Research, whatever its name, is a definitely planned effort to found a New Religion hostile to Christianity. It is a well designed plot to destroy the Church of Christ. This is rather a huge undertaking. Christ's Church is not easily overthrown. It has been attempted frequently in the past, but always with the same issue. We commend to Spiritists and all enemies of Christianity the history of the many efforts of the human intellect to rise

(11) Luke x, 16.

(12) Matt. xvi, 19.

against the yoke of Our Saviour. After each attack the Christian Church has emerged completely victorious. When we consider the tremendous blows which she has survived, we find it difficult to imagine what new assaults can cause her to perish.

CHAPTER II

CHRIST WAS NOT A MEDIUM

"Take heed that no man seduce you: for many will come in my name, saying I am Christ, and they will seduce many." (1)

"And every spirit that dissolveth Jesus is not of God; and that is Anti-Christ of whom you have heard that he cometh, and he is now already in the world." (2)

Whether Spiritism is a New Revelation or a New Religion, as is loudly claimed by its propagandists, whether it is to afford a firmer foundation for Christianity, whether it will modify or destroy the Church of Christ, may be apparent from the teachings of its well known and recognized leaders whose principal doctrines will be examined in some detail. They stagger us at the very outset by declaring that Christ himself was a Medium. His Divinity is brushed aside by the assertion that he is not God, but only a creature, a human being, one who is near to God. They call him the 'Christ Spirit' who represents God. In order to soften this cruel wound to the Christian conscience, we are told

(1) Matt. xxiv, 4.

(2) 1 John iv, 3.

with great condescension that Christ was the greatest Medium of all time. His powers were more highly developed than those of present day exponents of the mediumistic profession, but in all other respects he is like them. As a consequence his many stupendous miracles lose their divine character because they were performed by employing the natural psychic forces which he possessed. Hence all of the miracles of Christ recorded in the New Testament are mere spiritistic phenomena! Indeed they are quite common, we are informed, to those familiar with Psychic Research. Wonders of a similar nature are reproduced so frequently by mediums today that great light is thereby shed upon the use of Spiritism by Christ and his Apostles. We are told emphatically that the miracles of Our Saviour are nothing but the production of Spiritistic phenomena which virile mediums today can easily parallel; nay, more than that, that they can actually transmit this power to others. To style Christ's miracles the 'production of phenomena' is decidedly ingenious. Its language sounds strange to a Christian, since it does not savor of due reverence for the Son of God

and his work. But with pious unction we are summoned to believe in the credibility of the Gospel accounts of the miracles of Christ precisely because modern spiritistic mediums are alleged to perform similar wonders!!

We hope to show that none of the miracles of Christ have ever been reproduced by Spiritistic means, nor can Spiritists today ever point to a single case of a genuine miracle surpassing the powers of nature, performed by themselves. The gratuitous assumption of the Spiritistic fraternity continues, step by step, until finally we are told that the result of the present renaissance of Spiritism will be a new school of Biblical interpretation. Spiritists see nothing incongruous in flaunting themselves in the face of all the Christian centuries. It is evident that humility is not one of their dominant virtues. They cry aloud that the world has been entirely wrong for 1900 years, and that Spiritism has come to set it right, leading us on gradually to a new school of exegesis, in which all the Gospel story is colored by Spiritistic explanations. Fools rush in where angels fear to tread. Without adequate equipment of Theology, or its cognate sciences, Spirit-

ists have the temerity to found nothing less than a new system for interpreting and explaining the Bible. The world is strewn with the wrecks of those who attempted this task in former centuries. It were safer to touch dynamite. The Bible belongs to the Church of Christ, and she alone is competent to interpret it; she is the only officially appointed School of Biblical interpretation. Did not Christ say: "He that heareth you heareth me"?⁽³⁾ "If they will not hear the Church let them be as the heathen and the publican"?⁽⁴⁾

Those addicted to Psychic Research proclaim that on no account is the heart-searching gaze of Christ and his clear vision into the innermost thoughts of men to be attributed to his Divine knowledge. Why, say they, call in the supernatural when it is all so perfectly natural and obvious? Miracle working is quite an ordinary thing to Spiritists, and after all Christ was only a Spirit, a Medium, even though he be the Chief Medium, or the Christ Spirit. In explaining St. Mark's Gospel, for instance, "When Jesus presently knowing in his spirit, that they so

(3) Luke x, 16.

(4) Matt. xviii, 17.

thought within themselves saith to them: 'Why think you these things in your hearts?','⁽⁵⁾ Spiritists sweep the supernatural clean away, and they place all the miracle working power of Christ upon a purely natural foundation, even though he searches the secrets of the heart, lays bare the sinful lives of others, or hints at their hidden sins. Even Christ healing those who but touched the hem of his garment is shorn of his divine character, and relegated to the sphere occupied by a highly developed psychic medium; and the cases of healing which Christ performed at a distance by his Infinite Word are now assigned to the low level of Spiritistic phenomena. Such for instance as where Our Saviour drove the devil out of the daughter of the Syro-Phoenician woman, and where he healed the son of the centurion.⁽⁶⁾ All of these miracles performed by Christ are repudiated by the founders of modern Spiritism. Even the eighteen cases of healing in St. Matthew, the thirteen miracles of this class in St. Mark, the twenty cures in St. Luke, the four in St. John's Gospel, as well as the two miracles of healing in the Acts of the Apostles,—all are

⁽⁵⁾ Mark ii, 8.

⁽⁶⁾ Luke vii, 1.

rejected, and we are led to believe that every one of them was merely the 'production of Spiritistic phenomena.' They even explain away on this basis the miracle of raising to life the daughter of Jairus,⁽⁷⁾ alleging that the girl was not dead but merely in a comatose condition, and that Our Saviour only awoke her from a trance by suggestion, after having formed a psychic circle composed of Peter, James and John, who, they tell us, were the most powerful mediums in the Apostolic group. Christ's suggestion to the young girl resulted in her immediate recovery of consciousness, just as mediums today suddenly awake from a trance. How easy this all seems!! how natural!! Spiritistic writers pass over the quite positive declaration of Holy Writ that the girl was actually dead.

The raising of Lazarus to life⁽⁸⁾ is surrounded by a different set of circumstances, so another explanation is furnished us. Anything but the truth seems to satisfy a Spiritist, so they put their own interpretation upon this great miracle. It is a fair specimen of the method adopted by modern scientific minds to discredit the miracles

(7) Mark vi, 35.

(8) John xi, 33

of Our Lord. Instead of the plain, unvarnished facts, as they stand in the pages of the New Testament, we are given a highly fantastic account. The groans of Christ on this occasion, we are told, clearly indicate that he was a Medium. Do not modern mediums groan during their seances? Why then not explain the Resurrection of Lazarus by Spiritism, since Christ is alleged to have groaned audibly?

We have always been taught by scientists that the modern scientific method was to prove your facts, test your conclusions, and make good your ground as you go; that nothing was worthy of the name of science until it was supported by unimpeachable evidence in its behalf, capable of standing any test. Scientists and literary men with more or less scientific training, are now assuming the fairly lucrative task of popularizing and advertising Spiritism, writing many books about it, some of which rank with the six best sellers. But where in all this output is there a single scientific proof to corroborate this bold assertion that Christ was a Medium, and that his miracles were but prototypes of present day spiritistic phenomena? Scarcely ever since the

Pharisees of old accused Christ of performing miracles by the aid of Beelzebub.⁽⁹⁾ has such a calumny against the person of Our Saviour been employed. Outside of a superficial similarity in a few incidental and accidental details, not at all connected with the events themselves, and having utterly no bearing upon them, there is not a shred of evidence of any kind anywhere adduced to substantiate the claim. On the contrary there are numerous places in the New Testament directly contradicting this unwarranted assumption, and showing not only its improbability, but its impossibility as well.

In all the versatile and multiform exhibitions of his Divine miracle-working power, Christ never employed a dark room, nor even semi-darkness. The vast majority of his miracles were performed in the open air, in the crowded streets, and along the highways pulsing with life. Spiritists themselves reluctantly admit that all psychical phenomena produced in the dark must necessarily lose much of their value, and yet the dark is the favored spot for such production. It almost seems as if the passage in Holy Scripture

(9) Matt. xii, 24.

were again verified: "they have loved the darkness rather than the light."⁽¹⁰⁾

Christ never sat in a seance; he never produced any spiritistic phenomena such as spirit rapping, levitation, apport, table tilting, the ringing of bells, or causing trumpets or other musical instruments to float about in the air. He never distracted the attention of his audience by music or songs while he was performing his miracles, although this practice is almost universally used by mediums in the production of their psychic phenomena. Christ never went into a trance, yet that is the usual prerequisite of modern mediumship. He never imposed psychical conditions upon others, such as holding hands, or insisting that the sitters remain in a certain place, yet such things are obligatory in the modern seance. Never did Christ hesitate in the performance of his miracles; on the contrary most of them were instantaneous, unexpected, unhopd for interventions of his power. Never once did he suggest a postponement to a more propitious time. He never reported the conditions as unfavorable or difficult, and never

(10) John iii, 19.

in all of his career did he, by the slightest hint, indicate that his power depended on the aid or support of those in whose behalf he exercised his wondrous healing touch.

Moreover Christ never gave exhibitions of clairvoyance or clairaudience to amuse the populace; he never displayed his powers to satisfy the curiosity of the multitude, nor even to gratify the cupidity of a king.⁽¹¹⁾ He never made use of his infinite powers for gain, or a fee, as do modern mediums. Even prominent spiritists charge an admission for the purpose of informing us concerning those who have passed beyond. Christ never hypnotized any one; he never used a Ouija board, or the Planchette, or any apparatus corresponding to these instruments for communicating with the souls of the dead. He never called forth his supernatural powers for light or trivial reasons, and we never read of him gathering about him a circle for the purpose of getting into touch with the unseen. Power or virtue went out of him, but not with anything resembling a local motion or material transfer of power. Power did go out from Christ, but it

(11) Luke xxiii, 8-9.

left him unchanged, and with his own divine energy undiminished. A parallel of this may be found in a teacher and a pupil. The former transmits knowledge to the learner, without thereby lessening his own stock of knowledge. In this particular miracle virtue went out from Christ only in so far as its effects may be said to have been experienced by the woman who was cured by the healing power that Christ possessed. But there is here, as in all other travesties on the miracles of Christ put forward by Spiritists, not a particle of evidence of anything even remotely resembling a spiritistic seance.

Further than this, all the miracles he performed were no drain upon his physical strength; they were to him easy, without effort, without struggle; they caused no exhaustion in him; they did not leave him hysterical, or weary. Yet all of these conditions and results are verified in all modern mediums. Spiritistic mediums for physical manifestations sit only once or twice a week, and then for a limited time, extending usually one or two hours. Whereas Christ was accustomed to go about doing good all day long, nay, even far into the night, and

performing his miracles continually, yet it did not affect his bodily health. On the other hand, even Spiritists themselves complain of the tax upon their intellectual and bodily constitution by mediumistic practices. Spiritists claim that the sitters at seances supply a great part of the psychic energy required for spirit manifestations, and this energy is alleged to be taken in some unknown form from their bodies. Authentic photographs and the evidence of loss of weight, showing the psychic stuff in the process of flowing from the bodies of the mediums seem to bear out this contention. As a consequence if a person is in poor health the drain on the vital energy may be disastrous, and we are assured by competent and reliable authorities that this vital or nervous energy thus extracted from the bodies of the medium and the sitters requires a considerable period for restoration. When experiments are being carried out, the mediums often lose temporarily 30, 40 and 50 pounds in weight, yet we never hear of Christ losing weight in this fashion owing to the performance of his miracles.

Christ never used automatic writing, despite

the amazing statement of Spiritists who venture the opinion that among the many forms of mediumship which he possessed in the highest degree was the power of automatic writing. They refer to the celebrated passage in St. John's Gospel, the only instance in all of the New Testament where Christ is reported to have written anything.⁽¹²⁾

When we come to the Transfiguration of Christ, Spiritists tell us that this is only one of a large number of Spiritistic phenomena, easily duplicated today by any well developed medium. One simply stands aghast at the heights of blasphemy reached by the Spiritistic propagandists. They inform us that they have been present at miracles paralleling the Transfiguration of Christ performed by modern mediums! They tell us that at the miracle of the Transfiguration, Christ was in contact with the dead, and thus communicated with Moses and Elias after the manner of a spiritistic seance, Moses and Elias being only materialized spirits, just as psychic phenomena are produced every day in spiritistic circles. Yet in this case, as in all others adduced

(12) John viii, 8.

by the new religious sect, there is not a single solitary proof adduced to corroborate it, nothing but the declarations, assumptions and theories of spiritists set down solemnly as attested facts, without substantiation. At the Transfiguration, not a single movement of any of those concerned was in any way connected with what Spiritists tell us so emphatically is necessary for the production of psychic phenomena. There is the open air, the broad daylight, the mountain top. There is no swoon, no seance, no cabinet, no preparation, no raps, no tables,—indeed, the whole gospel narrative⁽¹³⁾ is a simple, straightforward account of a miracle that is separated by an abyss from anything that is even remotely associated with psychic phenomena.

Christ never used such childish twaddle as the enigmas and literary puzzles put forth as serious revelations from the other world by modern mediums, who act as the mouthpieces of discarnate spirits. Christ's sermons, discourses and conversations, as preserved for us in Holy Scripture, are simple, direct, full of unction, lofty, noble, and dignified. They reveal his Infinite wisdom,

(13) Matt. xvii, 1.

whereas the messages purporting to be the revelations of modern spirits read like the effusions emanating from an insane asylum.

Christ never became excited or eccentric, as are all, or nearly all mediums today, most of whom are persons of little or no education. Christ never descended to exaggeration, a feature that seems to characterize all modern mediums, male and female. Surely one must have lost all reverence for Christ to class him with such creatures! Never do we read of Christ losing consciousness, or lapsing into a swoon, or falling into the repulsive and morbid symptoms usual in Spiritistic manifestations. That such things are customary is not made too public by the advertising agents of the modern Spiritistic renaissance. They conceal this very dark side to the picture.

They rarely refer to the repulsive shaking and trembling of the medium as the vital energy is being withdrawn. The many photographs of mediums under control are sufficient to shock the Christian sense of propriety. Surely this is evidence that the whole process of Psychic Research is against nature, and is a violent removal

of the barriers which nature has erected. Never did any of the miracles performed by Christ have an evil effect upon those in whose behalf he worked, or upon the beholders; whereas there is a downward tendency in all those who coöperate in the experiments of the seance room.

Never do we read of the expenditure of wearisome hours in the process of establishing conditions, or of the frivolous waste of precious time to the complete neglect of all true and wholesome spiritual exercises on the part of those who were in immediate contact with Christ. Never in all of his public life did Christ indicate physical collapse after performing a miracle. Yet this is the ordinary effect today upon mediums who regularly and frequently engage in seances. It usually requires several days for a public medium to recover strength after the ordeal. Yet in spite of all this we are warned in trumpet tones that by such disastrous methods, perilous alike to the intellectual sanity and moral character and physical constitution of all concerned, we are being made the recipients of a new and tremendous revelation from all wise and merciful God!!

Christ never extracted psychic stuff from the bodies of so-called sitters for the purpose of performing his miracles. Never did he withdraw from his own sacred body any astral material for this object, yet Spiritists tell us that the production of phenomena depends upon this operation, and innumerable photographs of the issuance of this psychic stuff from the bodies of the mediums amply prove their contention. The function of the medium is to borrow from his body this ethereal psychic stuff, and the function of the sitters is to supplement the psychic energy. All Spiritists agree in the existence in man of an astral substance of an unknown nature, somewhere between matter and spirit, which, if detached from the material body, offers a means of communication with the unseen world and is the raw material out of which spirit manifestations occur. Mediumship, therefore, consists in the ability of a person easily to detach from his body this so-called teleplasm or astral substance while in a passive state. Spiritists claim that Christ was a Medium, yet there is not an instance in his entire life where any psychic stuff issued from him in the performance of his miracles or while

he was in a passive state. Nowhere do we read of the emanation from the body of Christ of the so-called "odoric effluvia" which some writers on Spiritism say generally appears as a radiant aura, and which at times transforms itself into a sort of limb, capable of exerting at great distances forces that are both dextrous and powerful.

Christ is eternal truth, whereas mediums and the spirits who control them often deceive, they lie, they misrepresent, they cheat, they contradict each other, they give false names, and they give addresses that are unverifiable. Many of them have been sooner or later caught in trickery and fraud. The miracles of Christ were never produced amid the noise, confusion and disturbance that frequently characterize the seance room. Christ never took part in a gathering whose sole result was throwing about the furniture, producing spirit lights, pulling the hair of the attendants, playing tricks on them, stroking their heads, kissing them, or similar actions. The mere thought of such things shocks the reverent Christian mind. Yet all such things are the usual phenomena attending the exercise of me-

diumship, and in spite of it all we are told that Christ was a Medium, yea, the greatest Medium of all time!!

Is there a single recorded public utterance or private statement of Christ that is occupied with the mere trivialities of life, or the insipid memories of the dull and vapid existence of some discarnate spirit? On the contrary, Christ's miracles were performed alone and unaided, by his own inherent divine power, without any intermediary. They all took place in the full light of day. Never did he descend to tricks. He never went into convulsions; he needed no elaborate preparation; he scored no failures. The results were always certain and decisive, and no cry of fraud or trickery was ever raised regarding him, even by his avowed enemies. In a word at every turn we behold in Christ the very antithesis of all those circumstances and surroundings and environment that are so peculiarly in evidence in modern mediums. Hence to allege that Christ was a medium is at once to place him on a level with the unwholesome practices indulged in by all modern spiritistic mediums.

On many occasions the evil spirits rec-

ognized Christ⁽¹⁴⁾ and acknowledged his divinity, yet he never permitted any conversation with them; he never sought to obtain occult information from these diabolic agents; he never encouraged others to invoke them, but immediately detecting them, banished them, condemned them, drove them out from the unfortunates whom they had obsessed, and by his whole attitude manifested his desire that the human race have nothing to do with them, demonstrating thereby that he knew them to be demons, and not the souls of the dead. Never did Christ refer to these spirits as other than evil, and intelligences to be entirely shunned; never once did he refer to the persons obsessed by these evil spirits as other than their unfortunate victims. So that at no single point in his career is there a parallel between the practices of modern Spiritism and the methods employed by Christ.

Never once did Christ, the supposed greatest medium that ever lived on earth, intimate that we should seek knowledge from the dead, or from discarnate spirits; nor did he ever indicate

(14) Luke iv, 41.

(15) Mark i, 34.

the manner in which such communications could be achieved; neither did he in any single instance intimate how such information, even if legitimate, could be identified and guaranteed from error; nor did he ever formulate laws or principles, or set up a standard and a system for regulating such information, or propose rules to guide us in separating what was true from what was false in all such communications. More than all this, all such communications were strictly forbidden in the Old Testament, and under the severest penalties:—

“Go not aside after wizards, neither ask anything of soothsayers to be defiled by them.”⁽¹⁶⁾

“The soul that shall go aside after magicians and soothsayers, I shall set my face against that soul, and destroy it out of the midst of its people.”⁽¹⁷⁾

“Neither let there be found among you any one that shall expiate his son or daughter, making them to pass through fire, or that consulteth soothsayers, or observeth dreams and omens, neither let there be any wizard, nor charmer, nor any one that consulteth python spirits, or fortune

(16) Lev. xix, 31.

(17) Lev. xx, 6.

tellers or that seeketh the truth from the dead. For the Lord abhorreth all these things, and for these abominations he will destroy them at thy coming."⁽¹⁸⁾

Christ formally and explicitly approved this Old Testament legislation, and by his solemn utterance "Do not think I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill,"⁽¹⁹⁾ he forbade any attempts on the part of his followers to engage in Spiritistic practices.

The only existing history of the life of Christ is the New Testament. Hence the miracles of Our Lord recorded there are in league with history, and they who accept them are on plain, high, safe ground. Those who deny them, or allege them to be the mere production of spiritistic phenomena cannot possibly be at home in the pages of the Evangelists. To deny Christ's miracles or to interpret them in any psychic fashion is to mutilate and enfeeble the whole of the Gospel narrative. All of the four Gospels concur in representing to us Christ encased in a setting of miracles. The mere enumeration of them

⁽¹⁸⁾ Deut. xviii. 10.

⁽¹⁹⁾ Matt. v. 17.

would make a very large total, and Spiritism has nothing to show that can compare in the slightest with any of the recorded miracles of Christ during the three crowded years of his public life. The mere list of the passages describing them, their great diversity, and the peculiar circumstances surrounding them, make an impressive recital.

In all the miracles of Christ, he invariably distinguishes cases of obsession from other cures, and the Evangelists are at some pains to mark this distinction, specifically calling attention to the proper diagnosis made by Christ, never confusing cases of obsession with ordinary symptoms of disease.

“And he healed many that were troubled with divers diseases; and he cast out many devils.”⁽²⁰⁾

“And Jesus went about all Galilee, healing all manner of sickness and every infirmity among the people, and they presented to him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and such as were possessed by devils and lunatics, and those that had the palsy, and he cured them.”⁽²¹⁾

(20) Mark i, 34.
(21) Matt. iv, 23.

"And running through the whole country, they began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was. And whithersoever he entered, into towns, or into villages or cities, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch but the hem of his garment; and as many as touched him were made whole."⁽²²⁾

"And there came to him great multitudes, having with them the dumb, the lame, the maimed, and many others; and they cast them down at his feet and he healed them; so that the multitudes marvelled seeing the dumb speak, the lame walk, the blind see, and they glorified the God of Israel."⁽²³⁾

"And in that same hour, he cured many of their diseases, and hurts, and evil spirits; and to many that were blind he gave sight."⁽²⁴⁾

The supernatural prophecies and predictions of Christ are real miracles, which have nothing in common with Spiritism. In all of these far-seeing glances into the future, Christ is not passive, as are the sensitives in a seance; he is wide awake, alert, active, and in full possession of all

(22) Mark vi, 55.

(23) Matt. xv, 30.

(24) Luke vii, 21.

his faculties. There is about him no swoon, no trance, no dreamy state, no cataleptic condition, no hypnosis. Christ manifests a perfect knowledge of the secrets of the heart; he has an intimate knowledge of Simon, for instance, whose name he changes to Peter.⁽²⁵⁾ He is familiar with the innermost secrets of the heart of Nathanael.⁽²⁶⁾ He is perfectly aware of the sad condition of the Samaritan woman.⁽²⁷⁾ The treason of Judas⁽²⁸⁾ is not hidden from his heart-searching gaze, and he reiterates his betrayal by this unworthy and money loving follower a few hours in advance of his base act.⁽²⁹⁾ He predicts with fulness and detail the triple denial of Peter.⁽³⁰⁾ In general terms he deliberately and calmly prepares his disciples for his coming passion, sufferings, and death.⁽³¹⁾ With a precision and a clarity that are remarkable he gives the most minute details, as if the whole tragic event were spread before him as in a map.⁽³²⁾

He foretells the ruin of Jerusalem⁽³³⁾ even to its minor features: He predicts the fate of St. Peter,⁽³⁴⁾ His chosen Rock; the long delayed

(25) John i, 42.

(26) John i, 47.

(27) John iv, 16.

(28) John vi, 71.

(29) Matt. xxvi, 21.

(30) Matt. xxvi, 31.

(31) John xiv, 29.

(32) Matt. xvi, 21.

(33) Matt. xxiv, 25.

(34) John xxi, 18.

death of St. John is revealed to the beloved disciple; and the persecutions to which the Apostles ⁽³⁵⁾ are to be subjected are foretold to them in advance, as well as the proximate descent of the Holy Ghost. ⁽³⁶⁾ All of the miracles of Christ took place in the presence of a great number of witnesses, a large proportion of whom were not his friends. This circumstance is not verified in spiritistic circles where mediums repeatedly refuse to continue the seance or produce any phenomena unless the sitters are sympathetic. The supernatural works produced by Christ did not take place in a corner, a circumstance to which Holy Scripture feels it necessary to call attention. ⁽³⁷⁾ These stupendous marvels were verified, not only by his selected friends, but also by his bitter and implacable foes. Witnesses numbering hundreds were either indifferent or hostile, both to Christ and his miracles, yet on no single occasion did they cry fraud, allege trickery, or complain of deception. Their objections to his miracles were not made because they denied the fact that a miracle had been performed, but for reasons flowing from the admitted facts,

(35) Matt. x, 17.

(36) John xiv, 16.

(37) Acts xxvi, 26.

for instance, because they were performed on the sabbath day.⁽³⁸⁾ Miracles such as those of the paralytic⁽³⁹⁾ curing the man born blind,⁽⁴⁰⁾ restoring the withered hand,⁽⁴¹⁾ relieving the woman possessed by an evil spirit,⁽⁴²⁾ or healing the drop-sical man⁽⁴³⁾ who had lingered for many years, all were objected to on the ground of a violation of the commandment to rest on the Lord's day—yet we hear no repudiation of the fact of the miracle itself. His enemies would not have allowed to pass an opportunity to cry fraud, if any such existed, hence their silence is an eloquent argument for the truth of the event.

The mere touch of his hand is omnipotent and suffices for the working of a miracle, as in the case of Peter's mother-in-law. He cures the sick, raises the dead and drives out demons without any elaborate apparatus, preparation or warning, employing but a single word, such as "Go out of the man."⁽⁴⁴⁾ "I will, be thou cured."⁽⁴⁵⁾ "Arise, take thy bed."⁽⁴⁶⁾ Peace, be still."⁽⁴⁷⁾ "Young man, I say to thee, arise."⁽⁴⁸⁾ "Lazarus, come forth."⁽⁴⁹⁾ "He touched her hand and the

(38) John v, 17.

(39) John v, 1-15.

(40) John ix, 1-38.

(41) Matt. xii, 9.

(42) Luke xiii, 10.

(43) Luke xiv, 1.

(44) Mark i, 25.

(45) Matt. viii, 32

(46) John v, 8.

(47) Mark iv, 39.

(48) Luke vii, 14.

(49) John xi, 43.

fever left her.”⁽⁵⁰⁾ “And the sick that he cured by the laying on of his hands.”⁽⁵¹⁾

Frequently miracles took place without any external indication on the part of Christ that they were to occur, there being no outward manifestation of his will, for instance, his walking on the water,⁽⁵²⁾ The “Miraculous fishing,”⁽⁵³⁾ “Healing at a distance,”⁽⁵⁴⁾ “The cure of the servant of the centurion,”⁽⁵⁵⁾ “The healing daughter of the Chanaanite woman.”⁽⁵⁶⁾ Once only did he put clay on the eyes of a blind man,⁽⁵⁷⁾ although ordinarily the result was instantaneously produced, without any intermediary. Even Herod admits the fact of Christ’s miracles.⁽⁵⁸⁾ The doctors of the law, the last persons in the world to lose an opportunity to deny the miracles, none the less admit them, even though irritated at the fact. The high priests in spite of their enmity are forced to admit it again and again by crying out “He saved others; let him save himself,”⁽⁵⁹⁾ yet they are all the while plotting his death. They could not deny the reality of the miracles because the whole countryside

(50) Matt. viii, 15.

(51) Mark vi, 5.

(52) Matt. xiv, 25.

(53) John xxi, 6.

(54) John iv, 46.

(55) Matt. viii, 7.

(56) Matt. xv, 28.

(57) John ix, 5.

(58) Matt. xiv, 2.

(59) Matt. xxvii, 42.

was filled with those who had been cured by Christ. On one occasion an official inquest was deliberately organized to test the fact,⁽⁶⁰⁾ the case being the cure of the man born blind. This is one of the most dramatic passages in the New Testament, and like the denial of St. Thomas it serves to throw into high relief the solid foundation of reality upon which rest all the miracles of Christ.

The noble serenity and perfect simplicity with which Christ performed them are in striking contrast with the labors and futile efforts of Spiritists. His groans at Lazarus' grave were entirely independent of the miracle.⁽⁶¹⁾ In no sense was it an indication of a medium passing under control, but merely an expression of his deep and abiding sorrow for the grief stricken family, a touching incident of the wondrously delicate and finely attuned human nature of Christ. He performed his miracles as easily as we do ordinary actions. For him to raise the dead to life was the same as to wake them from a tranquil sleep.⁽⁶²⁾ Hence from beginning to end of his miracles, stretching through the years of

(60) John ix, 1.

(61) John xi, 33.

(62) John xi, 12.

his public life, there is no effort, no hesitation, no uncertainty. His language always is modest and reserved, a word, a gesture, and the deed is done. All of his prodigies were performed with a superhuman poise and dignity, and assurance of the possession of inherent divine power as his personal prerogative, and with a high and lofty purpose in view—the manifestation of eternal truth. Between the exalted message of Christ to fallen humanity which he came to heal, save and restore, and the message of modern Spiritists there is an abyss that is impassable. The chieftains of the spiritistic forces now admit that Spiritualism has forfeited considerable because it has not organized its position into a moral, ethical, intellectual or spiritual force for the redemption of individual and social life. It has no supreme and consoling message for humanity. It has concentrated interest almost exclusively on communication with the dead and the survival after death. We search in vain through the vague and indefinite records of Spiritistic seances for any tangible religious or moral doctrine. There is none to be found that we did not know ages ago, and this reveals its utter weak-

ness to establish itself as a practical every day working basis for a new religion. All the miracles of Christ were performed quietly, unostentatiously, no matter what the nature of the miracle he performed, whether it was cleansing the leper, searching the hidden thoughts of the heart, restoring sight to the blind, walking the waves, calming the tempest, driving out the demons, feeding of the multitude, restoring a withered hand, or raising the dead to life.

He performed many miracles but not, however, in a prodigal manner. He always worked within reason with superb calm and supreme self restraint and for an object of a high moral character, as well as a supreme necessity in the physical order. For instance, he multiplied the loaves, but ordered the fragments to be gathered lest anything go to waste. He performed no miracles during the first thirty years of his life, and this wondrous self restraint is in itself a miracle of self-abasement when we compare the character of the miracles of Christ with Spiritistic phenomena. The latter are produced without aim, without object, without reason, without purpose, in a reckless, haphazard fashion. Nor

can it be urged against Christ's miracles that they were performed in the presence of an ignorant multitude and that no commission of learned men, university professors or scientists stood by to investigate them.

It is not necessary to have a commission of scientists to pass upon the plain, obvious, evident, historical fact of a miracle. Facts are verified, not by the learned exclusively, but by the testimony of reliable witnesses. Miracles belong to the moral order, and we cannot apply to the moral order the forms, rules, methods and procedure applying to another and entirely different order. Miracles are historical facts, and it is necessary to treat them as such. Historical facts cannot be subjected to an experimental verification such as we employ in physics or chemistry, for this would be equivalent to changing history into a natural science; it would be tantamount to a complete revolution of its character and reverse all the rules of historical criticism. The ordinary plain people endowed with integrity and common sense have eyes to see and ears to hear, and that equipment is sufficient for them to verify an historical fact. To subject historical

facts to a commission of learned men is on a par with awaiting the decision of a commission of professors before deciding that Germany was defeated along the Marne. The American armies composed of ordinary young American soldiers who pushed back the German legions in the Argonne needed no scientific commission to tell them that they won the war.

Too much attention should not be paid to the opinion of Physical Scientists who are now devoting considerable attention to Spiritism. Physical Scientists have no business with the spiritual world at all: they have no instruments to solve the problems of the next life. Science is of the earth, earthy, and it must confine itself to its proper sphere. It is the business of the Theologian to discuss problems concerning the Soul and the future life. Physical science is concerned with the sensible world, with the phenomena which we see, hear and handle, touch, or weigh, in short, with the phenomena which meet the senses. It is occupied exclusively with matter and it can never invade the domain of mind. It is quite evident, therefore, that Theology is just what Science is not. The-

ology is occupied, not with the finite, but with the Infinite, not with the creature, but with the Creator. Theological Science and Physical Science are contrary the one to the other; each of them has a method of its own.

What is known in Christianity is just that which is revealed, and nothing more; certain truths communicated directly from above are committed to the keeping of the Church and to the very last nothing can really be added to those truths. From the time of the Apostles to the end of the world no strictly new truth can be added to the theological information which the Apostles were charged to preach to all nations by Our Saviour. It is possible, of course, to make numberless deductions from the original doctrines, but as the conclusion is ever in the premises, such deductions are not strictly speaking an addition. Physical Science proceeds along the path of experiment and induction; Theology is traditional and no laboratory work is required—we know now all that God has revealed. Physics is progressive and always reaching out for new fields; Theology in comparison is fixed, stationary, anchored. Content with developing its re-

vealed riches, Theology is ever looking to the past; Physical Science has visions of the future. Therefore the widely heralded opinions of Physical Scientists are not entitled to any great respect when they touch upon the domain of Theology.

The rise and spread of the craze for Spiritistic communication is but another evidence of the vacillation of the human mind, once it cuts loose from its anchorage to eternal truth. Truth is ever one and the same; whereas error is varied and multiform. It is always the same truth that must be opposed to error, but it is never the same error to which we must oppose truth; hence age old truths must be constantly restated in fresh terms to repulse the ever changing kaleidoscopic forms of error. Moreover, error is always rushing from one extreme to the other, and within the memory of living men we have a series of examples to corroborate the oscillation to which the human mind is subject once it lets slip its hold on divine and Christian faith. For instance: A few generations ago, the whole of the so-called scientific world was worshipping at the shrine of Materialism. Scientists, intoxicated

with the splendid discoveries in the realms of physical science, were tempted to push their conclusions to the extreme of saying that there is nothing spiritual at all in man or in the universe; they denied not only the existence of the human soul, but its immortality as well, and they scoffed at any future life at all.

Of course, a recoil was to be expected from this extreme view; it was false, and the reaction was bound to come. It came sooner than was expected, and took the shape of still another extreme view. The pendulum of error speedily swung to the opposite pole. Christian Science rose upon the horizon. It denied the existence of matter and repudiated everything for which Materialistic Philosophy had stood during the previous generation. Now a third oscillation is being observed throughout the world. A reaction has taken place against the extreme philosophy of Christian Science, which denies the material world entirely, and we have a new heresy, Spiritism, which utterly repudiating Materialism, and crying from the housetops the iniquity of any one who denies the soul, none the less admits the body, but claims the soul lives on

after death, even to the extent that we are able to communicate almost at will with discarnate spirits.

One can only reflect upon the next phase of error which is to seize the human mind when the inevitable reaction against the craze of Spiritism takes place. In the midst of all this ebb and flow of human thought concerning man and his destiny, stands the Church of Christ, ever one and the same, teaching today the self-same doctrines as she ever taught, unchanging and unchangeable, amid the ruins and wrecks of the false theologies and philosophies that have risen, flourished and fallen during close upon twenty centuries.

CHAPTER III

SPIRITISM ATTACKS CHRIST

"Dearly beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits if they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. By this is the spirit of God known. Every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God." (1)

"Neither let there be found among you any one that seeketh the truth from the dead." (2)

According to Spiritists, Christ is not God; he is only one closer to God than the rest of us mortals. He is the Christ Spirit, merely one of legions of similar spirits. Spiritists think they have shown quite enough reverence and homage to the Son of God when they reluctantly admit he is a perfect man. None the less he is only a man, shorn of all Divine character and power, a mere creature, like the balance of mankind, and not the great Infinite Eternal Divine Creator, as Scripture and history alike reveal him to us.

It is an interesting study to follow the working out and development of a false idea in Theology. A few hours devoted to an inquiry into the rise,

(1) I John iv, 1.

(2) Deut. xviii, 10.

growth, dissolution and decay of all the heresies against Christianity during the last nineteen centuries, would save the leaders and followers of Spiritism from many perils. All the truths of Christianity are so intimately bound together that they form one perfect whole. None of them can be denied without shaking the entire structure; none can be removed, or passed over without destroying the integrity and essence of the Religion of Christ. Hence a repudiation even of one single truth in Christian teaching speedily paves the way for more denials and for the rejection of still other truths, until finally the whole edifice crumbles. This is the phenomenon we are observing in the attempt to develop Spiritistic doctrines into a religious system. Once the Divinity of Christ is denied, a whole train of fearful consequences is the immediate result, consequences which were never dreamed of by those who attempted to erect a religious edifice on so slender a foundation. What a strange set of beings these Spiritists are! They tell us they have come to give a firmer basis to historic Christianity, and in the same breath they deny the Divinity of Christ. Historic

Christianity without the Divine Christ is a sort of Christianity with which history has not up to this time been familiar. It is a sort of Christianity that Christ would not approve. "He that is not with me, is against me," he says.⁽³⁾ Spiritists are against the Divine Christ, therefore they are in every truth the "Anti Christ" of whom the sacred writer speaks in such terms of solemn warning.

It is not necessary at this late date to write a treatise on the various proofs to substantiate the Divinity of Christ. The elementary text books on Christianity are filled with such arguments. In them any seeker after truth will find developed in full detail the many cogent reasons compelling the human mind to assent to the great truth which is the very heart and soul of the Christian Religion. Christ amply proved his Divinity by being the perfect fulfillment of all the ancient prophecies written concerning him; predictions written more than a long thousand years in advance of his birth; prophetic utterances that give with the most minute detail the intimate circumstances of his life, passion,

(3) Matt. xii, 30.

sufferings, death, resurrection, the founding of his Church, and the miracles he worked while on earth. And all this occurred a thousand years and more before his appearance on earth, making Christ the one solitary and unique instance in history of a person whose biography was written ages before he was born. This is why Christ refers the doubting Jews to the Scriptures, suggesting that they search their own sacred records,⁽⁴⁾ for they already gave eloquent testimony to his Divinity. This is why St. Matthew uses that celebrated and oft repeated Scriptural formula. "Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled that which the Lord spoke by the prophet, saying."⁽⁵⁾ When Christ performed a miracle, or preached a sermon, or held a conversation or engaged in any other great act, St. Matthew usually calls attention to the fact that the very instance he is recording was foretold centuries before by the prophets of the Old Law. Hence the fulfillment of all those old predictions is not only one of the evidences of Christ being God, but it is evidence for the divine origin of the Bible, for none but God can foretell

(4) John vii, 52.

(5) Matt. i, 22.

the future,⁽⁶⁾ and none but a divine book could record it in advance—yet Spiritists repudiate both of these fundamental Christian doctrines.

Christ performed all manner of miracles and he appealed to these miracles as a proof of his divinity.⁽⁷⁾ The preceding chapter gives in detail some of the many instances where Christ manifested his power over the chained and otherwise unalterable laws of nature, proving them to be plastic in his hands, as he was the author of nature, to whom all things were easy. Christ made many predictions, not merely about others, but also concerning himself and the Church which he founded. He foretells events of the most personal nature, all of which were accurately verified in those who were immediately associated with them. He speaks in advance of the various tragic incidents connected with his passion, death, burial, and the progress of his Church. Not only this, but in the greatest of all his surpassing miracles, his Resurrection, he displays the full extent of his power as God. This it is that makes St. Paul cry out: "If Christ be not risen again, your faith is vain."⁽⁸⁾ Thus,

(6) Matt. xxiv, 36.

(7) Matt. xi, 5.

(8) I Cor. xv, 14.

the Resurrection is the very kernel of Christianity; without it our faith is meaningless; with it, all is coherent.

Christ worked miracles to prove his Divinity, but there is a special characteristic about his miracles that makes his Divinity shine out splendidly. It is the manner in which he performed them. He wielded infinite power, and he held it in leash. He could have annihilated his enemies yet he refrained. Possessed of infinite power, Christ might well have terrified those with whom he came in contact, yet he never invoked his infinite strength in his own behalf. He was utterly unselfish in its use. To hold nature's laws in his hand and to wield them at pleasure would have a tendency to repel, rather than attract, others. Men always fear the possession of unlimited power because it may be exercised against them instead of being employed to their advantage. Hence the marvelous self restraint of Christ's power is Divine. Even his enemies acknowledged that the possession of such power made it possible to work incalculable harm, yet they recognized this self restraint so much that they even provoked him

to exercise it in his own behalf and he declined.

Christ proclaimed in a hundred ways that he was God. We must not forget that all past history is unanimous in admitting that Christ was perfect. Spiritists themselves preach this. In him was found no flaw; his honesty, his sincerity, his goodness, his virtue, are admitted even by the most inveterate foes of Christianity, and his humility stands out triumphant as one of the crowning virtues of his life. But, let it be asked, was Christ possessed of any of these virtues if he be not God? Could any one possessed of any virtue at all claim he was God unless he was actually so? Could you, dear reader, pronounce yourself to be God, and claim to be humble?

Christ always proposed the highest standard of morality. Never is there in him a confession of any unworthiness. He claims to be God. He challenges his audience to accuse him of sin.⁽⁹⁾ And in striking contrast with this is the humble confession of weakness and sin on the part of every other great teacher in the world. No matter how exalted or virtuous human beings have been in all the vanished ages, whether Pagan,

(9) John viii, 46.

Jewish or Christian, they always shrank from any claim to perfection. The holiest souls are the ones most alive to the consciousness of their own personal sins. Yet this is precisely what Christ never manifests; he claims to be a model for all mankind. Therefore, he must be God, for none other but God would have dared to do this. The men in Christendom most conspicuous for the sanctity of their lives are precisely the ones who have been noted for their self accusation; yet Christ never once in all his career confesses the need of pardon; never does he acknowledge the slightest blemish. In the case of a human being this would be the most consummate pride; in Christ, however, in whom humility was raised to an infinite degree, his assertion of his Divinity must be taken as true.

Christ is God by reason of the manner in which he taught during his public life. He condemns in the severest terms the doctrines propounded by the most influential leaders among the Jews. He assumes a higher position than any one ever took among the chosen people, divinely sent though they were. He does more than this, and it is the most daring thing in all

the world's history. He passes in review the acts and decrees of the Old Law, changes them, alters them at his pleasure or approves them! Think of it!! His constant formula was "It was said to them of old—but I say unto you."⁽¹⁰⁾ Could any but God have done this? How different is the language of the prophets? They have a mission direct from God, and they constantly acknowledge the author of their mission. They speak nothing of themselves. Their formula was "Thus saith the Lord," whereas, Christ constantly speaks in his own name, with an imperious command and with an authority vested in his own Divine personality.

Christ preaches himself. He does not look to one higher than himself as the author of his message; he is no mere instrument or mouth-piece of a superior. He calls himself the light of the darkened world.⁽¹¹⁾ He says clearly that he is the only way by which men may reach heaven.⁽¹²⁾ He solemnly declares that he alone is the truth that can satisfy the cravings of the human soul.⁽¹³⁾ He cries out in tones still ringing down the ages that all who would have life,

(10) Matt. v. 27-28.

(11) John viii. 12.

(12) John xiv. 5.

(13) John xiv. 6.

and who would really live forever, must have that life imparted by himself.⁽¹⁴⁾ He is the very Bread of Life, without which there is no living.⁽¹⁵⁾ He is the Good Shepherd,⁽¹⁶⁾ nay, the very door of the sheepfold.⁽¹⁷⁾ He is the true vine, the life tree of regenerate humanity,⁽¹⁸⁾ and he claims to be the awful judge of the entire human race. In other words, "he will proceed to return at the end of the world to discharge an office involving such discernment of the thoughts and intents of the heart of each one of the millions at his feet, that the imagination recoils in sheer agony from the task of seriously contemplating the assumption of these duties by any created intelligence." Only God can judge humanity, and Christ's declaration of judicial authority over all the world is evidence of his Divinity. Christ sets up an imperious claim to rule the entire soul of man. He commands, not merely invites, discipleship. He wants not merely man's energies, his time, his money, his ability, some portion of his affections, he wants the whole heart and soul. He wants *all* of man. His cry is "Follow me." His message is to be received wholly and unre-

⁽¹⁴⁾ John xiv, 6.
⁽¹⁵⁾ John vi, 35.

⁽¹⁶⁾ John x, 11.
⁽¹⁷⁾ John x, 9.

⁽¹⁸⁾ John xv, 1.

servedly under the pain of eternal loss. Nothing can intervene between him. He will allow no rival claim. "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me."⁽¹⁹⁾ Could any but God have set up this claim over the human heart?

In addition to all this, Christ places himself on a par with God by claiming a power equal to God and by demanding for himself the homage and worship of mankind, due to God alone. He claims a right to break the God-given Sabbath, placing himself on a level with God the Father, and the miracle he performs on the Sabbath day he does distinctly as his own work, by his own authority and in his own name. He is no mere delegate, acting for another. He claims that whatever the Father does, he also does.⁽²⁰⁾ "I and the Father are one."⁽²¹⁾ He is conscious of an eternal pre-existence, antedating his human life on earth. His knowledge extends backwards throughout a boundless eternity.⁽²²⁾ He constantly speaks as One on whom time has no effect. The Sanhedrin accused him of making himself the Son of God⁽²³⁾ and yet before them he did not

(19) Matt. x, 37.

(20) John v, 19.

(21) John x, 30.

(22) John viii, 52.

(23) John xix, 7.

deny it, nor explain his language in any other than its most obvious meaning, admitting in the most positive, formal and explicit manner that he was in very truth the Son of God, and did not repudiate this plain construction put upon his words both by his friends and foes. .

If Christ be not God, is he really humble and sincere after all the manifold evidences of self-assertion on his part? Christ wants us to love him, obey him, live for him, die for him, reject all else but him; he claims to be the universal teacher and saviour of men. Is he humble if he demands all this? Hence, none but God could do so. Say Christ is God, and all is intelligible; if he is not God, then all of the Bible is a mockery and a defense in its behalf an hypocrisy, and Christ is (*sit venia verbo*) the worst charlatan and greatest fraud, cheat and impostor of all history. There is therefore no middle ground—either Christ is God or he was a rogue or he was insane, which is obviously out of keeping with his well balanced thoughts, words and actions.

In substantiation of the fact that a repudiation of one of the truths of Christianity speedily re-

sults in a denial of all, we have as a consequence of the rejection of the Divinity of Christ a number of conclusions that to the Christian mind are startling. They deny the fact of original sin; they ridicule the idea that man fell from grace; they spurn the Scriptural account of the sin of Adam and Eve by calling it a baseless figment of the imagination; they repudiate the lapse of our grand first parents from a state of primal innocence. Once started on a path of negation such as this, we may be prepared for the most surprising conclusions leading to still further denials. The results of this initial error in Theology are so tremendous and so far reaching that if there were no fall, what becomes of the Atonement, of the Redemption? What is left of a large part, if not the whole of historic Christian Theology? To hack away at the keystone of the arch of Christianity in this fashion is to cause the whole edifice to totter. Christianity must be taken in its entirety or not at all. We cannot pursue an elective course in Religion. Christ ordered us in tones indicative of stern command to "observe all things whatsoever,"⁽²⁴⁾ he had taught us, not

(24) Matt. xxviii, 19.

one or two or a few. It is all or none. The Spiritists are fond of quoting in St. Paul to support their strange doctrines. They will not object, therefore, when we also quote their favorite author to disprove their statements. "In Adam all die"⁽²⁵⁾ he cries out, "wherefore, as by one man, sin entered into this world, and by sin death, and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned."⁽²⁶⁾ If man never sinned according to the Spiritists, what need was there for Christ to suffer and die? Hence we quickly find them telling us that Christ did not come upon earth to take away the sins of the world in spite of our Saviour's explicit statement to the contrary. "I came not to call the just but sinners."⁽²⁷⁾ They further inform us that the Incarnation and Sufferings and Death of Jesus Christ were in no sense an atonement for the sins of man." In short, that so far as Redemption is concerned Christ might just as well have not come upon earth. To which St. Paul enters this denial; "We were reconciled to God by the death of his Son."⁽²⁸⁾ St. Paul of all authorities is the one to whom Spiritists should not appeal.

(25) I Cor. xv, 22.
(26) Rom. v, 19.

(27) Matt. ix, 13.
(28) Rom. v, 10.

St. John tells us that God loved us so much, that he sent his only begotten Son as a holocaust for us,⁽²⁹⁾ yet Spiritists can see no justice in a vicarious sacrifice nor in the God who could be placated by such means. Calvary and its awful Sacrifice that has formed the very center of the affections and worship of the most of Christendom for 1900 years is insulted, rejected, and cast aside in the new Spiritistic Revelation,—for they tell us frankly that the Crucifixion of Christ was not of great importance; indeed too much is made of Christ's death. In other words, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, The Way of the Cross, the awful days of the Passion and the tragedy of Golgotha mean nothing to Spiritists, and it is by doctrines so shocking to the Christian conscience that Spiritists are to give a firmer basis to historic Christianity and to add new lustre to Christ's teachings!!

Since Christ's death is of no importance to Spiritists, we can be prepared for their no less astounding opinion concerning his Resurrection from the dead and his many appearances thereafter. This stupendous miracle is swiftly reduced

(29) John iii, 16.

to the level of mere natural phenomena, one of the numerous sensory automatisms so familiar to those accustomed to seances, and the many appearances recorded after the Resurrection are to be attributed to Spiritistic activity since apparitions are customary in the production of psychic phenomena. St. Paul devotes an entire chapter in his first Epistle to the Corinthians to extolling the benefits accruing to mankind because of Christ's having risen from the dead, and picturing for us the woes that would have befallen us had he not done so. "And if Christ be not risen again," he says, "then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain."⁽³⁰⁾ "God hath raised up Christ."⁽³¹⁾ In spite of this, Spiritists attack this great truth by saying that the placing of emphasis upon the Resurrection of Christ was the great mistake of Christianity."

It is too late in the centuries to accuse Christianity of making a mistake. Spiritists call into question the fact of the Resurrection. Yet for 1900 years the Resurrection has been one of the "fixed facts" of history, and it argues no small degree of presumption and arrogance to deny it.

⁽³⁰⁾ I Cor. xv, 17.

⁽³¹⁾ I Cor. xv, 15.

The Resurrection is looked upon by all Christians as the dominant proof of the divinity of the mission and teaching of Christ. It set a heavenly seal upon his life and work. It is a demonstration adapted to the capacity and understanding of all classes whatever their intelligence. Having proved that Christ died, and has come to life again by his own power, without the aid of astral matter or psychic stuff borrowed from the gardener or any other person, there is absolutely no escape from the conclusion that he is really God. It is inconceivable that God would allow such an imposition upon humanity as to permit of a falsifier to work such a prodigy, especially when such a miracle was foretold and appealed to in advance as the very crown of his divinity. Hence God's honor is involved in the Resurrection of Christ. If Christ be not risen from the dead by his own power, then humanity should have nothing to do with God for allowing the human race to be deceived in this fashion. Christ not only foretold his own Resurrection, but the Apostles appeal to it constantly in their preaching. When there is a vacancy in the Apostolic group, to fill the place of the traitor

Judas, the qualities demanded of the new candidate are that he shall not only be a witness to the life and death of Christ, but to his Resurrection as well.⁽³²⁾ The attempt of Spiritists to explain the Resurrection upon purely natural and psychic grounds is one of the few attempts during the last 1900 years of the enemies of Christianity to find such an explanation. Hitherto the customary attitude of Christ's foes has been to deny the Resurrection entirely. Atheists, agnostics, infidels,—all realized the accumulated weight of evidence was so tremendous that there was no possible escape from either admitting the fact and its consequent divine and miraculous character, or else denying it in its totality. There was no middle course. It remained for modern Spiritism to evolve this new and fantastic explanation.

There can be no question that Christ was dead when he was placed in the tomb. St. John expressly tells us that he died⁽³⁴⁾ on the cross, and the other Evangelists give the same testimony. The atrocious tortures that he endured before being crucified would in themselves have been

(32) Acts i, 22.

(33) I Cor. xv, 14-17. (34) John xix, 33.

sufficient to kill him; the marvel was that he lived three hours hanging in agony on the cross, a form of punishment that the great Jewish historian, Josephus, tells us was in itself sufficient to cause death. The Roman soldiers who were sent for the express purpose of bringing about his speedy death by breaking his legs did not do so, for the simple reason that this was unnecessary, Christ being already dead. The piercing of his side with a lance by Longinus was in itself enough to cause death at that moment, and Pilate did not give the body of Christ to Joseph of Arimathea until he had officially received the proof of Christ's death from the Centurion in command of the troops. The Jews themselves were convinced of his death, else they would not have demanded a guard over the tomb. So we see on all sides, and from all classes, a unanimous conviction of the certain death of our Saviour.

Yet, suddenly nature is conquered, and history reverses itself. After three days, Christ who was dead reveals himself full of life, and this fact is attested by a large number of witnesses, worthy of belief. They did not see him in sleep, or during a dream, or at night, but in

broad daylight, when they were in full possession of all their faculties; they heard his words, received his commands, touched him, felt his pierced hands and feet and put their fingers into his open wounds; they even reclined at the table and ate with him. During a period of 40 days this continued, under the most varied circumstances, in a great variety of conditions, and among all classes of people. He was seen close to the tomb, in the garden; on the road to Emmaus, in the upper room, on the shore of the lake, on the mount of Olives and elsewhere. He was seen not only by the holy women, but by men as well, by St. Peter, and the disciples at Emmaus; then by all the Apostles gathered together, by that famous skeptic St. Thomas who wished more evidence than the others; nor was he denied it. Then to seven of the Apostles on the shore of the lake, and finally in Galilee, when there was an assemblage of five hundred of his Apostles and disciples, most of whom were living when St. Paul wrote his celebrated Epistles to the Corinthians,⁽³⁵⁾ an appeal to their testimony as a proof of the Resurrection of his Lord

(35) I Cor. xv, 6.

and Master. In all these apparitions of Christ there was no dark room, no dim ruby light, no medium, no cabinet, no complicated apparatus, no table tilting, no spirit rapping; no automatic writing; no direct voice manifestation, nothing in short that characterizes modern mediums and Spiritistic seances. The characteristic of Modern Spirit materializations is that usually they occur only a few feet distant from the medium, and they are ordinarily visible only for a few minutes at a time and in a darkened room. Whereas the appearances of Christ after the Resurrection were at varying distances, often considerable ones, and they were visible for a long period of time in the sunlight. The Apostles and disciples not only saw Christ, talked with him, broke bread with him, and visited with him, but they were so convinced of the reality of the Resurrection that they willingly laid down their lives for the truth of their belief. No one at all familiar with the history of Christ and his dealings with the Apostles can accuse them of being credulous, and easily persuaded. On the contrary, they were hard to convince, and unwilling to make an act of faith. Hence, this new attitude on their

part, even to giving up their lives as martyrs for their faith in Christ's Resurrection is a proof of the highest order.

Still another effect of Spiritists to discredit and deny this miraculous element in the life of Christ is found in their attributing to psychic phenomena the celebrated miracle of Our Saviour walking on the water, related in detail by three of the Evangelists and the very clear account of it in the Gospels is alleged to be due to the fact that the sacred writers were quite familiar with psychic apparitions and spiritistic phenomena.⁽³⁶⁾ But no sane man could utter such a calumny. A simple reading of the Gospel narrative shows that Christ appeared to the Apostles in the early morning, there was no spiritistic apparatus, no medium, no darkened enclosure, no cabinet, no trance, no hypnotism, no hallucination. It was on the high seas; the Apostles were frightened, therefore they were not accustomed to the production of spiritistic phenomena. The apparition was no usual affair, as is alleged, hence their trepidation. Moreover, Christ spoke to them, and actually entered

(36) Matt. xiv, 22.

the ship with them, so that it was no phantom—no ghost—but Christ himself. To attempt consequently to place this or any other miracle of Christ in the category of spiritistic phenomena is neither science or religion, but a studied effort to discredit Christianity and to attack its great central stronghold, the divine personality of its Founder.

Consistent with its avowed policy of explaining every event in the life of Christ from a spiritistic standpoint, we are treated to this highly novel account of the well known triple temptation of Christ by Satan⁽⁸⁷⁾ which is referred to as a travelling clairvoyance, a phenomenon, we are told, quite common with spiritistic mediums, and by which the soul leaves the body and travels to the places represented in the vision. It is a sort of globe trotting soul, in a half dreamy state, with no objective representation at all. This fantastic account shows to what lengths Spiritists are ready to go in discrediting Holy Scripture. No effort is too far fetched to use against Christ. For Spiritists the Bible is no longer the Word of God in the sense that historical Christians be-

(87) Luke iv, 1.

lieve it to be inspired; it is merely a form of automatic writing, tainted with the mentality of the mediums coöperating therein, and consequently the Bible contains misstatements and errors. Shocking as this is to the devout Christian mind, it is the only possible conclusion from the spiritistic premises, and it should put us on our guard against the new sect, that on the pretense of proving the soul's immortality, is undermining the entire fabric of historic Christianity by actually or virtually, either explicitly or implicitly, denying every doctrine of the Christian faith.

Spiritist authorities assure us that Christ selected his Apostles and disciples for no other reason than that they were good mediums, possessed of unusual psychic powers. Out of all the multitudes from whom he might select his companions he chose twelve men.⁽³⁸⁾ Why these particular ones? It was not for their intelligence or learning, say the Spiritists, for Peter and John, who were among the most prominent, were expressly described as unlearned and ignorant men. It was not for their virtue, for one of

(38) Matt. iv, 18.

them proved to be a traitor. It was not for their unwavering faith, for there were great numbers of earnest believers. And yet Spiritists claim they were chosen on some subtle principle since they were called in ones and in twos. In at least two cases they were pairs of brothers, as though some family psychic gift or peculiarity might underlie the choice. In other words, we are told by the Psychic Research Propagandists that the quality which determined their choice by Christ was this—that they were good Psychics, and Christ, the greatest medium who has ever appeared upon earth, desired to surround himself with others who possessed similar qualities. But this is mere gratuitous assumption. Never since rational man existed on earth has pure assumption risen to the height of proof. It is a violation of the elementary rules of logic to assume as already proven the very point in argument, yet this method is customary at every step and is on par with the whole Spiritistic profession. Christ never, in any way, at any time, gave any indication whatsoever of being directly or indirectly engaged in the production of Spiritistic phenomena. Never did he indicate

by word of action that his followers either during his lifetime or afterwards were chosen for their psychic powers. Christ, the Son of God, the omnipotent and eternal and everlasting, never depended upon a few frail, weak human creatures to give him some of their "psychic strength" to enable him to perform his miracles.

Even Pentecost, the birthday of the Church, is robbed of its supernatural significance. It was nothing but a seance, the production of psychic phenomena, a purely natural event. Spiritists declare that on that historic Sunday, the Christian leaders were all "with one accord" in one place, and they seize upon the phrase "with one accord" as expressing admirably those sympathetic conditions which in psychic circles have always been found conducive to the best results. It is difficult to be patient with the publicity agents of Spiritism. They falsify the most obvious texts of Sacred Scripture. In this passage the whole argument is built up upon the phrase "*with one accord*," yet had a later translation of the Bible than the King James been consulted the argument would have failed. The Protestant Revised, like the Douay version, has

the more accurate rendering—"all together" meaning they were all present instead of "with one accord"—so does the Latin and Greek original. Is this an honest method of founding a New Religion? Is this a Scientific way to add new splendor to the Religion of Christ? Is it ethical to deliberately distort texts in this fashion to support a thesis? The gift of tongues verified at Pentecost is lightly waived aside by saying that in seances Mediums frequently speak unknown trance tongues. The remarkable difference is that mediums speak while in a trance, whereas at Pentecost there was no trance condition verified among the Apostles. Further, mediums in a trance state act in an automatic manner; they are in a condition of passivity, without initiative, without volition, without control; whereas conditions the very reverse of this are to be noted at Pentecost, where the Apostles manifested a degree of high activity; they were the masters of the situation; they knew what they were about, and they addressed themselves resolutely to their task with the utmost energy. Moreover, in a trance condition, mediums have no clear knowledge of their utterances; nor do

they direct the course of their thoughts. Whereas the Apostles at Pentecost had a connected view and grasp of their subject, and in well ordered fashion set out to achieve it. In addition to all this, a further variation must be observed. The gift of tongues in the Apostles was external and outside of them, in persons whom they addressed, the effect having taken place upon the minds of their audience of several thousand, whereas in the medium the effect is internal, within the medium who speaks a strange tongue. Hence all through the weary effort of following Spiritistic claims, we find upon investigation only a superficial parallel that is nothing else than a travesty upon historic Christianity; it is a caricature that Spiritism presents to us, a counterfeit, nothing real or substantial in the way of paralleling genuine Christian miracles. Thus the whole character and value of the miracle of Pentecost is misconceived by writers on Spiritism. St. Luke tells us expressly "Every man heard them speak in his own tongue,"⁽³⁹⁾—and he emphasizes the names of the nations present putting before us the expressions employed by the vast audience from the ends of the earth.

(39) Acts ii, 6.

"We have heard them speak in our own tongues the wonderful works of God."⁽⁴⁰⁾

There is here no question of dark lantern methods, no seance room mysteries, no curtained cabinets, no table tilting, no spirit rapping, no hysterical mediums, no trance, no selected few who were sympathetic, no psychic circle, no holding of hands, no suggestions, no hypnotism, no clairaudience, no direct voice. It is the plain open air, out of doors—where "The multitude came together."⁽⁴¹⁾ The crowd was in a doubting rather than in a receptive mood, they demanded proof, and the proof was immediately furnished by St. Peter in his address to that many tongued population—"Parthians and Medes, and Elamites and inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappodocia. Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome. Jews also, and Proselytes, Cretes and Arabians." Peter spoke and the doubters were convinced, "and there were added in that day about three thousand souls."⁽⁴²⁾

The miracle of Pentecost was at once a physi-

(40) Acts ii, 11.

(41) Acts ii, 6.

(42) Acts ii, 41.

cal and a moral miracle. One hundred and twenty persons were present,⁽⁴³⁾ and it resulted in a complete transformation of their character. Previously they had been cowards, hesitating, doubtful; now they became bold and zealous, braving all dangers, even death for their crucified and resurrected Master. What has Spiritism to offer in comparison with this? Having destroyed as they think the very essence of Christianity the Spiritists proceed steadily attacking every doctrine that stands in their path. Everything sacred must be explained in accordance with their Spiritistic theory. Once upon a time in respectable circles Science was built upon facts; it had to fit the evidence and square with the phenomena on every side. Now modern Scientists reverse the natural scientific processes of centuries and try to make the facts fit their preconceived theory. This results in distorting, truncating, evading, minimizing, denying facts, however well proven, just as it suits their unchristian purposes. By these methods Spiritists are prostituting not only religion but they are prostituting Science.

(43) Acts i, 15.

According to Spiritism, the Sacrament of Baptism is no regenerating function, cleansing the recipient from sin and infusing supernatural life. It is merely the reception of psychic power. Denying sin, ridiculing the necessity of a renewal of supernatural life, rejecting Baptism whereby man is raised again to be a child of God, the next step is that of doing away entirely with the spiritual order instituted by Christ to perpetuate his work. Hence we are treated by Spiritists to the absolute rejection of the Sacrament of Holy Orders. In the Church of Christ the representatives of religion are made the "ministers of God and the dispensers of the mysteries of his grace,"⁽⁴⁴⁾ but in Spiritism the priesthood has no place—the medium takes the place of the priest. According to the New Religion the Sacrament of Holy Orders was a mere passing on of psychic power, and Christ differed in no wise from any medium who is able to charge another with psychic force.

Spiritists declare that mediums are able to convey a power to other persons just as Christ when he was levitated over the lake was able to

(44) I Cor. iv, 1.

convey the same power to Peter so long as Peter's faith held firm. There is no case on record where a medium has conveyed this power to any one else. Yet it is with arguments such as this that Spiritists wish us to deny the Divinity of Christ. St. Paul too was a medium we are told, a student of psychic research, and his miraculous conversion while on his way to Damascus⁽⁴⁵⁾ was merely one of many similar incidents in the production of Spiritistic phenomena, an apparition of the dead, mainly an auditory one, a case of clairaudience on the part of St. Paul having all the features of mediumistic phenomena, both experimental and spontaneous, although in St. Paul's case, they tell us, it was an event of the first magnitude. This, it is alleged, was the beginning of virile mediumship with him; from that time on he began to recognize the phenomena in all their types. The miracles to which St. Paul refers are, it is alleged, mere psychic phenomena, and he spoke and wrote as a spiritist, manifesting a wide acquaintance with the entire range of spiritistic phenomena. But to this a flat denial must be entered. Even a super-

(45) Acts ix, 1-22.

ficial perusal of any of the Epistles of St. Paul would have revealed to any inquiring mind the tremendous abyss between the great Apostle of the Gentiles and modern Spiritism. St. Paul and Psychic Research are in open and violent opposition at every turn. Indeed his whole antipathy to Spiritistic Phenomena may be summed up in a characteristic passage in the Acts of the Apostles.⁽⁴⁶⁾ Like Christ himself whose ambassador he was, St. Paul drives out the Evil one in Christ's name. "And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain girl, having a pythonical spirit, met us, who brought to her masters much gain by divining. But St. Paul being grieved, turned and said to the Spirit: "I command thee, in the name of Jesus Christ to go out from her. And he went out the same hour."⁽⁴⁷⁾ Were St. Paul alive today he would employ his inspired pen and his gifted mind against the emissaries of Satan who are roaming the world disguised as Spiritists, as he did against the magician of old.⁽⁴⁸⁾ And in this he would be but carrying out his stern admonition to the Ephesians ⁽⁴⁹⁾ warning them to have "No fellowship

(46) I Cor. iv, 1.

(47) Acts xvi, 16.

(48) Acts xiii, 6.

(49) Eph. v, 11.

with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather reprove them." Lovers of dark rooms and obscure seances and curtained cabinets might ponder on this apt command of the great St. Paul.

Spiritists are taking out an insurance policy against eternal loss by fire. They don't want to go to Hell so they are doing away with it entirely. By this elimination of a highly uncomfortable future for sinful persons, Spiritism may appeal to a large clientele who have little regard for morality in its teachings. Hell drops out altogether they tell us. It simply does not exist.

This reminds us of the remark of a sagacious observer, who pondering on the wickedness of the world and the apparent preponderance of evil and the defeat of justice, cried out, "There may possibly be a heaven but there certainly will be a hell."

And yet some how or other, but just how we are not told, it may not be so happy over there, for there is still a hint of some inconvenient situations. Some sort of Purgatory still awaits the sinner. The idea of punishment, they tell us, or purifying chastisement, in fact the idea of Pur-

gatory, is justified by the reports from the other side. Without such punishment we are assured by Spiritists there could be no justice in the universe, for how impossible it would be to imagine the fate of a Rasputin the same as that of a Father Damien.

So the situation at best seems to be doubtful. Yet there is some hope, even if there is a Hell. Denying the Divine Christ to be the universal Redeemer of the human race, nevertheless they repudiate the age old expression "Out of Hell there is no redemption," for they teach that there is a progressive evolution out of Hell and its misery, a sort of wandering on and on; a probationary period as it were, a progression to a higher plane. But we summon all the Spiritists in the world to bring forward one single text of the Old or New Testament to substantiate this endless progressive march of the soul. It is very curious to observe the adroit way in which the doctrine of Purgatory is insisted upon to throw out a bait for the purpose of deceiving Catholics. Needless to say in all of Holy Scripture or in the great tomes containing the authentic teaching of the Fathers and Doctors of historic Christianity

there is not a line to substantiate this modern Spiritistic position.

It is not surprising, therefore, after having alleged that Christ and his apostles were mediums, and ancient Christianity was a perpetual darkened seance, that the early followers of Christ should have imitated their leaders, and the Apostolic Church was filled with spiritualism, they seeming to have paid no attention to those Old Testament prohibitions of Spiritistic practices but lived and acted as those who cultivated all the phenomena of Psychic Research. Evidently there is not much agreement in the realm of Psychic Research, because we are told by still other Spiritist writers that the Apostles did not succeed after Christ's death as well as he did; very few cures are recorded by them, and they were not so conspicuous as those of Christ.

Certainly the pens that wrote statements such as this, know nothing of the history of the Apostles or of early Christianity. The texts already quoted from St. Paul prove conclusively that the Apostles and first Christians held no communication with evil spirits, nor did they indulge in any form of Spiritistic communication; they

never evoked the souls of the dead, but conforming to the Old Testament prohibition and policy and example of Christ, they worked miracles and cast out devils and warned their followers to have nothing to do with dark room methods.

It was necessary for the Apostles to perform miracles to guarantee the divinity of the Christian religion, and this working of miracles was predicted by Christ.⁽⁵⁰⁾ That this forecast was realized in the most public manner is evident from the Acts of the Apostles, the first history of the infant Church.⁽⁵¹⁾ Among the most striking of the innumerable miracles of the Apostles were the healing of the lame man at the gate of the temple,⁽⁵²⁾ as well as that of the paralytic,⁽⁵³⁾ the healings performed by the mere shadow of St. Peter,⁽⁵⁴⁾ and the deliverance of St. Peter by an angel.⁽⁵⁵⁾ We read also of the many miracles worked by St. Paul at Ephesus and elsewhere, even by the mere touching of handkerchiefs brought to him⁽⁵⁶⁾ and of the resurrection of a young man, Eutychus, at Troyas.⁽⁵⁷⁾ The conver-

(50) John xiv, 12;

Mark xvi, 17.

(51) Acts v, 15.

(52) Acts iii.

(53) Acts ix.

(54) Acts v.

(55) Acts xii.

(56) Acts xix.

(57) Acts xx.

sion of St. Paul alone would be sufficient to prove the divinity of the Christian religion. It occurred in daylight, and worked in him a complete moral revolution. From an enemy of Christ, he became his passionate friend and Apostle, sealing with his life his energetic belief in the Divinity of Christ. Christ appeared to Saul, then to Ananias, then Saul was cured of his blindness, he was baptized and received the name of Paul, and worked ever after with unwearied love and fidelity for the conversion of the world. The reality of all these events is testified by the full accounts in the Acts of the Apostles.⁽⁵⁸⁾

During the first centuries of Christianity, the progress of the Church was marked and encouraged by the continuance of the power of performing miracles in the name of Christ. All the Fathers and writers of this period are unanimous in referring to these prodigies, which occurred before the eyes of the then scoffing world; they even invited the pagans to examine the cases and they were challenged to deliver to them any one possessed of a devil and they would speedily

(58) Acts ix.

liberate the unfortunate, as Christ guaranteed. The enemies of Christ themselves never dreamed of denying the fact of the miracles. They always admitted and acknowledged the reality of the fact itself, and hence the constant insistence of the Christian apologists that these facts were due to the divine intervention. In the following centuries, there is a vast number of authentic miracles to testify to the continuance in the Church of this power of working miracles in the name of Christ, yet not a word is ever uttered regarding Psychic Research, communication with the souls of the dead, or any Spiritistic Phenomena. The Acts of the Saints and the great historians of the early centuries give us an account of the striking miracles performed at their own particular period of history and worked under their very eyes, to which they had been ocular witnesses. Nor has the power died out as Spiritists would have us believe. Rome today has a special tribunal for the examination of all miracles and they subject every case to a rigorous scientific scrutiny and investigation. Before this court, the most august and competent in the entire world, many miracles in

the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were proven, which make the modern world a parallel to the wonders operated during the time of Christ, and prove true the prediction of Christ that this power would never fail. Yet in the face of all this testimony, running through nineteen centuries, we are told by Spiritists that the teaching of Christ was in many most important respects lost by the early Christians, and has not come down to us!!

CHAPTER IV

SPIRITISM AT THE BAR OF REASON AND REVELATION

"And this is the victory which overcometh the world, our Faith." (1)

"That henceforth we be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the wickedness of men, by cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive." (2)

SPIRITISM CONTRARY TO HUMAN REASON

Those who on earth were quite choice about their company are not likely to be supremely happy in the Spiritistic heaven where the souls of the good and bad mingle so promiscuously as they do in seances. Who would wish to go to heaven if all the unrepentant villains of the earth were there, mingling intimately with them, and turning heaven into hell? What one believes on earth seems to make little difference in the realms of the Spiritistic heaven. It is quite useless to be a Christian at all, to practice virtue, to be self-sacrificing, to follow the counsels of perfection, or to aim at a devout life, because murderers,

(1) I John v. 4.

(2) Eph. iv. 14.

adulterers and blasphemers will get just as much reward as those who lead an upright life. Ingersoll, Paine, Voltaire, and Renan who spent their lives scoffing at the divine Christ will fare just as well as those missionaries and martyrs who gave their lives that historic Christianity might be propagated. If the future life must be spent with the idiotic spirits who are manifested in the modern seance room, then immortality has no object. Certainly it is not an everlasting existence to which sane and saintly persons will be attracted. Spiritism will have a tendency to destroy, rather than to confirm belief in a future life as Christians understand it, or else it will have just the opposite tendency, namely to encourage those whose souls are racked with doubt and uncertainty to commit suicide so as to arrive at the truth which the human mind justly craves.

The spirits and mediums do not agree about conditions in the next life. Some say they have no hands; others indulge in athletic sports and piano playing, they live in brick houses, there are cigar factories there, and they get mud on their clothes!! So we are assured by no less authorities than Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir Ar-

thur Conan Doyle. None the less there is some compensation for those who find "dry" America a hardship, for the spirits assure us that there is an abundance of whiskey and soda over there. Prohibitionists and those of a Puritanical turn of mind are not likely to be altogether at peace in this spiritistic heaven where there are cigarettes and the demon rum. The Spirits are rather a dull, gross, material lot. Their conversation is invariably of things that are not at all spiritual. From authentic spiritistic photographs we observe that they have their pets and domestic animals in the next world. Of course some spirits say there are no animal pets in the next life, but this only adds to the confusion, and is one of the very curious things about Spiritism, the lack of unanimous consent about conditions in the future life. The trivialities and nonsense, the obscenities and blasphemies, the lies and contradictions of the seance room are notorious. The so-called spirits of the great ones of the earth that are evoked seem to forget their former existence, and act and talk as if they were lunatics. So evident are their lies and contradictions that Spiritistic leaders are forced to find some excuse for the

contradictions into which they are involved. For instance Milton cannot scan, Shelley is unable to make a rhymed couplet, and the Bard of Avon is a poorly educated simpleton. But the chiefs of the modern spiritistic cult draw a parallel between the liars on earth, and those in the next life, warning us not to demand more hereafter than we can secure here!!

Mediums claim that they can foresee the future, yet they could not foretell the sinking of the Titanic, on which their great admirer, Mr. William T. Stead, was a passenger. They did not forecast the Great War, either its beginning or its end. They are unable to save from sickness or financial disaster those who consult them, and were they possessed of a vision into the future, they would not remain poor, as most of them are.

The mediums suit themselves to the fancy of their sitters, adapting themselves to the tastes, habits and desires of those who consult them. They take into account the national, racial, intellectual, social and political aspirations of various individuals and peoples. They are pious when the devout appeal to them; they are loving when consulted by the affectionate, and they

adopt a statesmanlike attitude when approached by politicians. They are businesslike when their wisdom is sought by merchants, brokers and commercial leaders. They assume a learned air with an intellectual and scientific audience, and they do not hesitate to be vulgar and obscene with those to whom such thoughts and language make an appeal. In France they believe in re-incarnation; in England they deny it, while in Italy the favorite doctrine savors of Pantheism, Atheism or Materialism. Thus it comes to pass that Spiritism has a tendency to make the devil a fool, rather than the source of all evil, which is the historic Christian belief. Spiritists rob Satan of his inherent and unwearied malice, and they deceive the world into thinking that the devil is not as bad as he is painted. Truly this is a plan worthy of Lucifer, and in the opinion of sagacious observers it is one of the most subtle of all the evils of the new cult.

THE PERILS OF SPIRITISM

The physical dangers to mediums and sitters attendant upon the cult of Spiritism have already been alluded to in previous chapters. The

fact is openly admitted by friends and foes of the new cult. But too much emphasis cannot be laid upon the wrecked homes, the ruined lives, the unbalanced minds, the shipwrecked careers, and the thwarted peace and happiness of those who became involved in this most insidious of all modern perils.

The intellectual dangers are no less menacing. The mind enmeshed in the experiments of the seance room is kept in a state of anxiety and suspense, constantly awaiting fresh disclosures, ever hoping, and never having those hopes realized. Soon all intellectual activity is crushed. Lunacy is not infrequently the issue in some, while in others there is a total neglect of the natural powers of the mind, resulting in lazy, listless habits, impairing the mental faculties and unbalancing the judgment. This state of conflicting doubt and uncertainty prevents any fixed and settled convictions, either in religion, science, or in the ordinary affairs of life.

Morally the practice of the new cult weakens the will to such an extent that the result is the fullest yielding to impulse, without strength of character or energy to resist temptation, or an

opportunity for the play of the normal processes of thought and action. Thus all moral responsibility perishes, and the operations of the will are paralyzed. The mind passivity requisite in all mediums and sitters soon becomes an open door for the entrance of evil spirits, and as a consequence we observe again the ancient phenomenon referred to so often in the Gospels, the devils taking bodily hold of those who give themselves up to spiritistic practices.

EXPLANATIONS OF SPIRITISTIC PHENOMENA

1. The most common Spiritistic interpretation of the phenomena of the seance room is that all communications with the other world are with the dead, the discarnate souls of human beings who once inhabited the earth.

2. As opposed to this, there are three other views. Some writers assert that all, or nearly all of the phenomena of Psychic Research can be explained by purely natural laws. They even go so far as to say that the phenomena for which no natural law is yet known may still be due to the action of the unknown forces which will doubtless be made known by further experimentation.

3. Others advance the opinion that many of the phenomena reported are due to fraud, trickery and cunning. This opinion is rapidly being abandoned as no longer tenable. The evidence of a great body of serious investigators whose integrity is unimpeachable prevents us from even thinking of deliberate fraud or deception, either by them, or upon them, extending over a course of many years.

4. Finally there is a group of very distinguished investigators who admit most of the phenomena claimed by Spiritists, but they give an entirely different explanation of the facts adduced. Spiritists claim it is the souls of the dead who communicate with us, whereas this last group of authorities claim it is diabolic intervention, the action of unseen evil intelligences, commonly known as demons. There is no doubt that some of the phenomena of Psychic Research have been and are now due to deceit, deception, fraud, lying, cheating and roguery, and that some of them are due to the operation of purely natural forces, partially known and partially unknown, but which further investigation will doubtless reveal to us in all its phases. Over and

above all this, there are spiritistic phenomena which cannot be explained either by fraud or the operation of natural laws. To account for them the operation of unseen, spiritual intelligences or demons must be offered as the only explanation that fits all the facts of the case.

That evil spirits, or fallen angels, exist, has been known as long as the world has been created. It is a fact admitted by Spiritists themselves. Many investigators, whether champions or antagonists of the Spiritistic position, such as Sir William Barrett, Doctor Carrington, Professor Flammarion, Doctor Viollet, Doctor Laponi, and Mr. Godfrey Raupert, go so far as to say that the cases of demoniac possession spoken of so frequently in the New Testament are paralleled today in many cases of modern mediums, where the evil spirits take possession of human beings and employ them almost at will for their nefarious purposes. Such for instance are the numerous cases of automatic writing, when the obsessed persons are compelled by the demons to write day and night, without rest, and to write the foulest things that can be imagined, and against which they rebel, but in vain.

It is sometimes difficult to convince Catholics, who are not familiar with the literature or phenomena of Spiritism, that the facts in the case point unmistakably to the intervention of unseen evil intelligences in worldly affairs, and that they are accountable for much of the phenomena obtained in the seance room. This should not be. Catholics, of all persons, should have no hesitation in believing in the existence and nefarious activity of demons. After the Mass, celebrated daily in countless churches throughout the world, a public prayer is recited to God, imploring his Divine protection against the malice and snares of the enemy, Satan, and the other evil spirits who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. This is a continuous act of faith in the existence of demons, and an expression of the conviction that they can and do harm us.

SPIRITISM CONDEMNED BY THE CHURCH

The Catholic Church has always recognized the possibility of demoniacal possession. The Roman Ritual, which lays down regulations for Exorcisms that are centuries old, provides meth-

ods for determining whether the obsession is by devils or not, and formulates rules for expelling demons. Countless times throughout the last 1900 years the Church has legislated regarding devil worship, obsession, black magic, necromancy, spiritistic practices, seances, and all other similar methods of holding communion with the unseen world. The Canon Law of the Church contains innumerable references to the legislation enacted by the Ecclesiastical authorities in Rome and elsewhere throughout the world to guard the faithful from the evils of Spiritism.

As far back as 1585, Pope Sixtus V issued a Constitution on the subject, in which he discusses the whole matter, and warns Christians of its perils. On July 28, 1847, Rome again issued a decree warning Catholics of its dangers and prohibiting them from attending seances. The eyes of Rome are ever upon the signs of the times, hence on March 30, 1898, we were given a further decree by the Holy See reaffirming the previous prohibition, taking into account new methods of spirit communication, and forbidding Catholics to practice them. Finally, by a decree dated April 24, 1917, Rome prohibited

even a passive assistance at a spiritistic seance, and interdicted under severe penalties even the idle curious visiting such seances merely as a spectator. Hence for a Catholic to practice Spiritism, to engage in Psychic Research, to attend its seances, even out of curiosity, to assist even in a passive and indifferent way, without any active coöperation is to run counter to the laws of Church. It is in the eyes of Ecclesiastical authorities equivalent to paying divine honor and tribute to departed spirits, or demons, and as such the Church is competent to condemn it, just as she is competent to condemn any heresy or assault against the deposit of faith entrusted to her by Christ.

THE SPIRITUALISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

There can be little doubt that the present craze for communication with the unseen world is due to a natural craving in the heart of man to be in touch with God. Man was made for God, and only in him can he find rest. Hence a right knowledge of God must convince us that the religion he has established to be his representative on earth must have within it everything calcu-

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lated to satisfy the legitimate cravings of the human heart. Among these insatiate longings is the desire to know something certain about the unseen world. The "Communion of Saints" has been an essential part of the Catholic creed from the very beginning of Christianity. The Church firmly believes in the possibility of communication with the unseen, but she does it in a manner utterly at variance from the dangerous methods practiced by Spiritists.

Recognizing the validity of man's desire to communicate with the supernatural, she has safeguarded this holy aspiration by wise regulations; they are no mere arbitrary decrees, but shaped and guided under the authority of the Holy See, and tested by the experience of long centuries, they have a double claim upon our interest and our obedience. The Church has plotted the course, laid out the lines of travel, set beacon lights along the highway; she mounts guard over the entire process of keeping in touch with the next world, thus protecting her children from the grave perils that otherwise would accompany the seeker after a knowledge of God. That is what Psychic Research lacks; it has no author-

ized control; it has no traditions, no precedents, no tribunal set up to supervise those who are its devotees, and as a consequence there is nothing but subjectivism, egotism, error, heresy, falsehood, atheism, agnosticism, and in the end devil worship, with the consequent impairment or total loss of spiritual and bodily health.

The Mystical Theology of the Catholic Church is earnestly recommended to all those who long to communicate with the unseen world. The history of the Catholic saints whose lives and whose writings entitle them to be classed as mystics would make thrilling reading for all mediums and attendants at spiritistic seances. Such were the lives of St. Teresa, St. Gertrude, St. Catherine, St. John of the Cross, St. Bonaventure, St. Francis de Sales, Blessed Angela of Foligno, St. Paul of the Cross, St. John of Cupertino, or Venerable Marie De l'Incarnation, to mention only a few of a vast number of mystics. Nor did all ecstasies live in the dim and distant past. One of the most noted ones was Gemma Galgani of Lucca, Italy, who died in 1903. In the mystic theology of the Catholic Church will be found explained the extraordi-

nary forms of prayer practiced by the great ecstasies of history. The higher forms of contemplation in all their varieties, as well as the gradations of private revelations, the visions granted to the Saints, and the union growing out of these between God and the soul are all set forth with clarity and sanity. All this rich and solid literature will furnish the criteria laid down by the wise and saintly writers of the Church for facilitating the mystic union of the soul with God, while at the same time preserving the soul from lapsing into error or heresy. They indicate maxims to prevent self delusion and the soul's deception, mistaking the powers of darkness for those of light, or the promptings of their own weak selves in place of the Divine voice, dividing the true from the false, and separating diabolism from the true worship of God.

Those interested in Psychic Research will find pleasure and profit by reading above all the works of St. Teresa. This extraordinary woman was one of the greatest saints the Church has produced; her uncommon good sense, sound judgment and practical sagacity united in her the mind of a man, and the delicacy and tender-

ness of a woman. Before her time mystic theology had neither logical nor chronological development. It was not in any sense a science. It was she who first treated in systematic form all the phenomena of mysticism, organized and classified all we know about it, and made it a real science. Before her mystic theology concerned itself with ecstasies, visions and revelations; whereas St. Teresa addressed herself to a thorough analysis of the various processes by which the union of the soul with God is achieved.

Many of the saints of past ages have been ecstasies, and it is highly interesting to institute a brief comparison between the ecstasies and visions of the Catholic saints and the trance states of Spiritistic mediums.

In mediums during a trance there is a lessening of intellectual power, whereas, in the ecstasy of a saint this power is immeasurably increased by a process of illumination; and the pose and attitude of the body is a noble one, not repulsive or repelling as is characteristic of spiritistic mediums. One is attracted by the ecstasy of the saints, whereas one is repelled and disgusted at the facial and bodily contortions of mediums.

The hallucinations in the case of mediums are usually representations of the imagination; that is they are visual, auricular or tactual, affecting the senses, whereas, in the case of the saints in ecstasy, there are no hallucinations, the vision being purely intellectual. The mystic saints have been noted for their strong intelligence, their keen minds, and their lofty and noble projects for the good of religion and society. This is notably the case in the ecstatic founders of Religious Orders. They were men and women of large and liberal ideas, of great plans for God and humanity. But we will look in vain through the chronicles of history for any distinct achievement originated, carried on, or encouraged by any spiritistic medium. Furthermore, the loss of will power in mediums is notorious, whereas nothing could be stronger than the inflexible wills of the ecstatic Christian saints, who by their indomitable resolution overcame all opposition to their plans to promote the kingdom of God on earth.

Many mediums are subjective, selfish, egotistical and morally have reached no great heights of virtue, whereas the Christian saints who were

ecstasies have given the world magnificent models of self forgetfulness, and have been conspicuous for their absence of hysteria, their whole career having been marked by keen judgment and robust virtue. The trances of mediums do not impel them to lead very saintly lives, whereas the reverse of this has been true of the saints; after their ecstasies they have been led on to the very summits of virtue. Mediums are notorious for being incoherent, contradictory and material in their language and concepts, whereas the saints have been clear, connected, consistent, elevated and thoroughly spiritual in their revelations. In the history of the Christian religion there have been at times genuine and well authenticated apparitions of those who were dead and gone; they have been miraculous in every sense of the word; they have been verified by solid and unassailable proofs that will stand the strictest test in any court in the world.

At every point of comparison they are totally dissimilar to the manifestations of the seance room. There is no sensitive, no psychic circle, no dark room surroundings, the apparitions in the case of saints have been unbidden, no one

can predict when they will come or when they will go, they have not been invoked, we know no laws which they follow, they are beyond our control, we cannot take the initiative in producing them, nor can we shut them off at will, we can create no conditions in advance which are guaranteed to result in the apparitions, they are sudden and unexpected, and altogether spontaneous, there is about them nothing uncanny, nothing grotesque, nothing to impair health of sanity, nothing that runs counter to historic Christianity.

But the very reverse of all these circumstances is verifiable in the materializations of spirits in the seance cabinet. Spiritists in the modern experiments in Psychic phenomena take complete control of the situation; it is they who invoke the spirits, they who prepare in advance all the conditions, they who are the active agents in producing the result, and they can shut them off at will. There is nothing sudden or unexpected about their coming, and they follow certain laws, which, when operative, issue in results that can be assured in advance.

The one striking thing about them is that all

such revelations accorded to the Saints have been in perfect accord with the doctrines of Christianity. In no instance did those who died in the odor of virtue and sanctity, and who by the permission of God appeared to living beings thereafter, say anything that would repudiate the historic Christian doctrines which they professed during life, and for the defense of which many of them either actually died martyrs or would have gladly done so. On the contrary, they all confirmed in every detail the historic Christian faith they held during their lifetime. This is marked contrast with the denial of every doctrine of the Christian religion which we find the predominant characteristic of present day Spiritism.

For exhaustive detailed information relative to the actual experimental features of Spiritism, accompanied by illustrations and verbatim reports of messages from the other world, the reader is referred to the splendid works of Mr. J. Godfrey Raupert, K. S. G., in "Modern Spiritism," "The Dangers of Modern Spiritism," "Spiritistic Phenomena and their Interpretation," "Christ and the Powers of Dark-

ness," and his latest and most important work, "The New Black Magic." Mr. Raupert covers the entire field of Psychic Research and Spiritism with a master touch, having given the most and the best years of his life to a scientific study of the phenomena of the seance room. He was for years a member of the English Society for Psychic Research thereby coming in personal contact with all the noted leaders and mediums of the modern Spiritistic movement, and his volumes constitute a library on the subject that is easily the best in the English or any other language.

